

ULTIMATE GADGET GIFT GUIDE

Stuff

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iPhone YET**
WE REVIEW
THE 6S PLUS



**WIN
EVERYTHING
ON OUR XMAS
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MAN OF TODAY

GERARD BUTLER FOR BOSS BOTTLED



BOSS
HUGO BOSS

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LATE AFTERNOON
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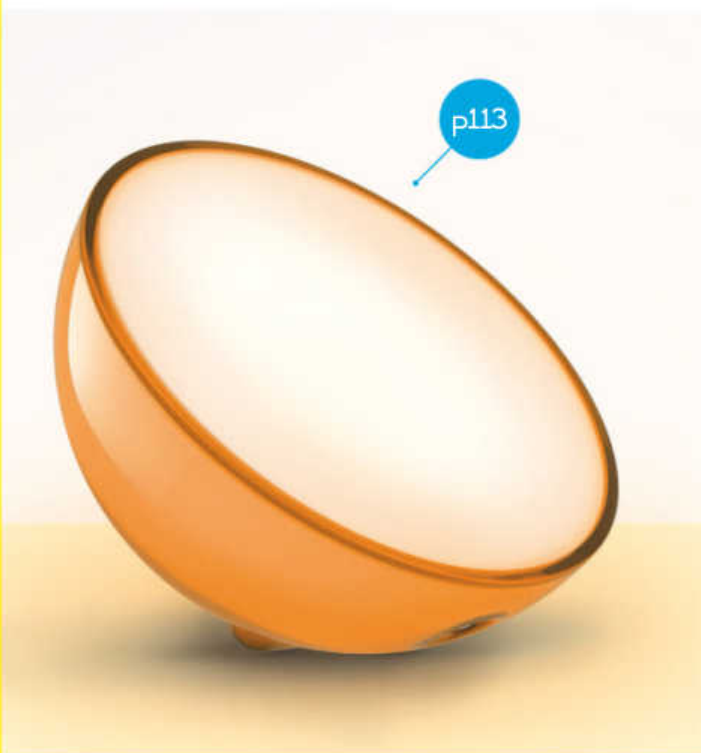
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WIN
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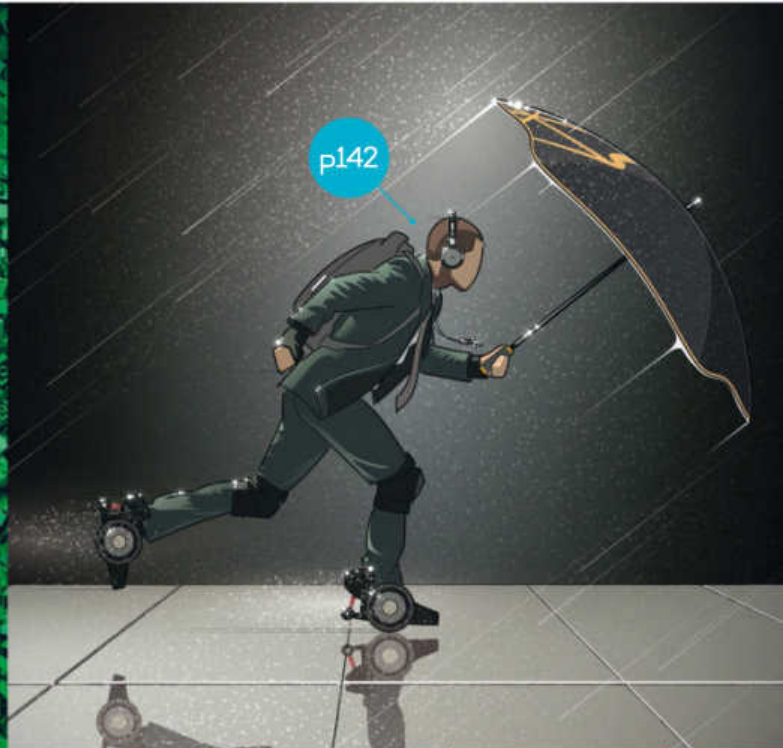
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- Music maker ● Retro lover ● Design devotee
- Apple fan ● Master chef ● Booze hound ● Clock star
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TOP 10 OF EVERYTHING

Looking to buy something but need a bit of advice? Turn to our *Stuff* Top Tens: our expert listings of all gadgetry, from p149

**NEW
ENTRY**



Dell XPS 13

★★★★☆

Mucho screen in not much space
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I OBSERVE THINGS
AND REMEMBER THEM VERY ACCURATELY.
I THINK THAT EVEN THE WAY IN WHICH
A MAN SHAVES IN THE MORNING
IS WELL WORTH RECORDING.

Ian Fleming™

IAN FLEMING,
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* Calls cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

WELCOME



Businesspeople of the world: we need your help. We need you on hoverboards. You came to our aid before, at the turn of the millennium, when the microscooters invaded. For a brief while, it looked as if rolling about on a little metal plank was going to supplant walking as the default mode of transport. But then you arrived, brave besuited men and women of the management community, and you had a go, and you showed us how ridiculous a person riding a microscooter could really look.

We need you once more. Call them hoverboards, airboards, Segways; this generation's ludicrous personal transport has arrived, and it's becoming dangerously popular. If we don't stop them now, every pavement will become an unending traffic jam of blue LEDs. All shops and restaurants will become roll-through; your dog will have to wait until you're charged up before you can take the poor mutt around the park. That's why we need you, managers of the world, to have a go. Only a middle-aged white man in a suit whirring up to a suburban train station on a hoverboard can deliver the kind of deeply, permanently unfashionable association needed to stop this tech in its tracks. Only Derek from IT has the power to ride the hoverboard away from its current trendy status and into the back of the charity shop, where it belongs.

Anyway, that's what I want for Christmas. How about you?

Will Dunn, Editor / willd@stuff.tv / @willydunn



**THIS MONTH
IN STUFF'S
DIGITAL EDITION**

- Animated, interactive pages
- Extra pictures and videos

Android fan? Stuff is also available on **Google Play**, **Zinio** and **Exact Editions**

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SONY



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The 4K Ultra HD TV.

Currys  **PC World**
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John Lewis

Sony Centre

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I SPOKE TWO LANGUAGES AT ONCE

Using the magic of Skype Translator's real-time

language translation, I spoke English into a microphone and a guy in Madrid heard it as Spanish, and he replied in Spanish and I heard it in London in English. It was both amazing and confusing, because he clearly understood everything I said in English anyway and I got most of what he said in Spanish. Try it yourself on p147 (if you've got any friends who speak Mandarin, Spanish, German, French or Italian).

Will Dunn, Editor



I HAND-PICKED 10,087 LEGO BRICKS FOR THE COVER FEATURE

Not really. But I spent the afternoon at Bright Bricks looking through their stock of over seven million Lego pieces. Then I carefully poured (actually tipped) the ones I liked into big bags, before sending them to Matt Beedle to take some amazing pictures of them. Think you'll agree they turned out pretty sweet (p56). Big shout out to Duncan Titmarsh, the only UK-based Lego Certified Professional, for letting us borrow his bricks.

Ross Presly, Deputy Art Editor



OUR MONTH

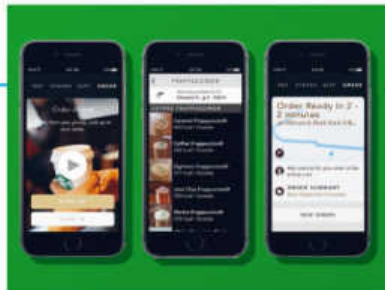
What this issue has brought us by way of geekery



I FOUND COFFEE'S SMARTER SIDE

"There's an app for that" has not, in the past, applied to getting coffee into one's face. It does now. Firstly, I had a go at Starbucks' app-based preorder system: order your mocha-choca-latte-cino with extra cream and an extra shot, then stride into the cafe like you own the place and your coffee will be waiting for you. Best of all, the chances of your name having been misspelt are heavily diminished. Secondly, see p116 for appy caffeine goodness at home.

Tom Parsons, Deputy Editor, Stuff.tv

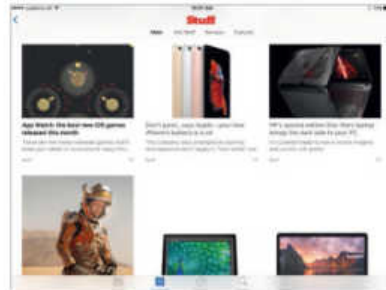


I LAUNCHED APPLE NEWS

Well, not all of it, obviously – just the Stuff-flavoured bits. And when I say

"I launched", I mean I sat back and made snarky comments while our Brand Art Editor Chee and developer Mihhail did all the hard work. Anyway, as you might have guessed, we now have our own Stuff.tv channel on Apple News, and – speaking purely objectively – it's rather good. By the time you read these words it should be available (for free) on your iPhone and iPad. Hope you like it.

Marc McLaren, Editor, stuff.tv



H O T S T

HOT
FOUR
#1



CORTANA'S SHINY NEW CONVERTIBLE

Microsoft Surface Book

It's strange to think that, despite having spent decades as one of the world's largest and most valuable tech companies, Microsoft has just made its first laptop. In the past, companies like Lenovo and HP made the screens and keys while Microsoft made what was seen and typed into and clicked on. But after a faltering start, Microsoft's Surface tablets turned out to be actually pretty good, and then—

with last year's *Stuff*-Award-winning Surface Pro 3—really very good indeed. Which is why we're really very excited about the Surface Book. Its 267ppi, 13.5in display is sharper than a MacBook Pro Retina, and it contains the sixth-gen Intel Core processor and battery it needs to work on its own as a tablet. The keyboard, though, is no mere peripheral. It contains powerful graphics hardware and yet more battery, enabling the conjoined pair—held together by 'Muscle Wire' locks—to work for 12 hours or more. A bendy 'dynamic fulcrum' hinge lets you fold the screen back on the keyboard, and you can draw or write with precision on the screen using the Surface Pen.

As hot as... throbbing Muscle Wire
from \$1500 / microsoft.com

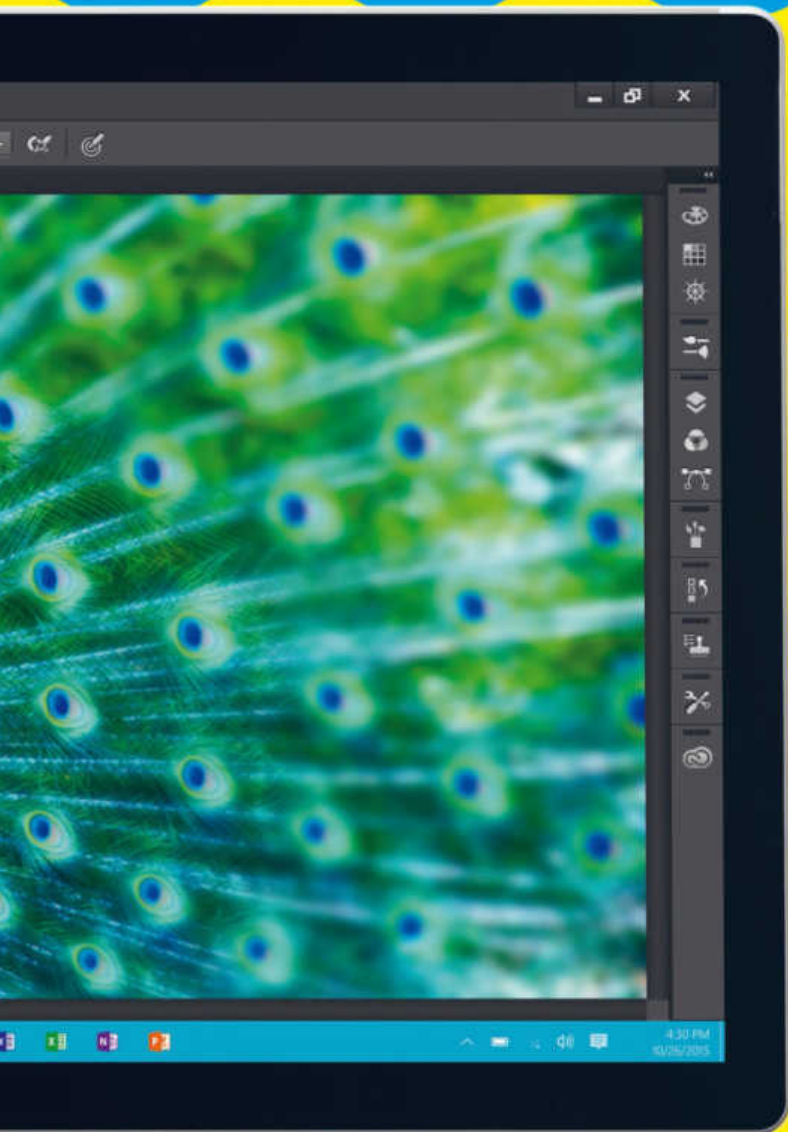


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25 PAGES
OF THE BIGGEST
STORIES FROM
PLANET TECH



MORE MICRO-MANIA



MICROSOFT LUMIA 950/950 XL

Both these Windows 10 phones have 2560x1440 displays, 20MP cameras, 3GB RAM and 32GB storage plus microSD.

£tba



MICROSOFT SURFACE PRO 4

The newest Surface gets a fingerprint sensor, Windows 10, larger screen, thinner chassis and more sensitive Pen stylus.

from £750



MICROSOFT BAND 2

With Win 10 softening the hearts of naysayers, there'll be demand for this in-ecosystem fitness tracker, with a comfy curved screen and barometer.

£200





Wristy business

The Pebble Time Round comes in preconfigured colour combos of 14mm or 20mm strap widths. Gold, silver and black metal straps are "on the way".

HOT
FOUR
#2

WHAT OLD FATHER TIME GIVES TO LITTLE DAUGHTER TIME

Pebble Time Round

Imagine one hundredth of a Labrador, rolled flat and wrapped around your wrist. Horrific. But there's only one better way to experience the feeling of a smartwatch that weighs just 28g, and that's to try that watch for yourself. That watch is the new Pebble Time Round. It takes Pebble's familiar colour e-paper display, makes it round and attaches it to a thin, round watch – one with a choice of strap widths, and a rose gold colour option that highlights it as very much One For The Ladies. Pebble's oft-heralded week-plus battery life takes a hit in the featherweight Round, but it'll still last two days and it has a new 15min quick charge feature that'll give you a day's watchiness in the time it takes you heat up and inhale a breakfast Rustlers.

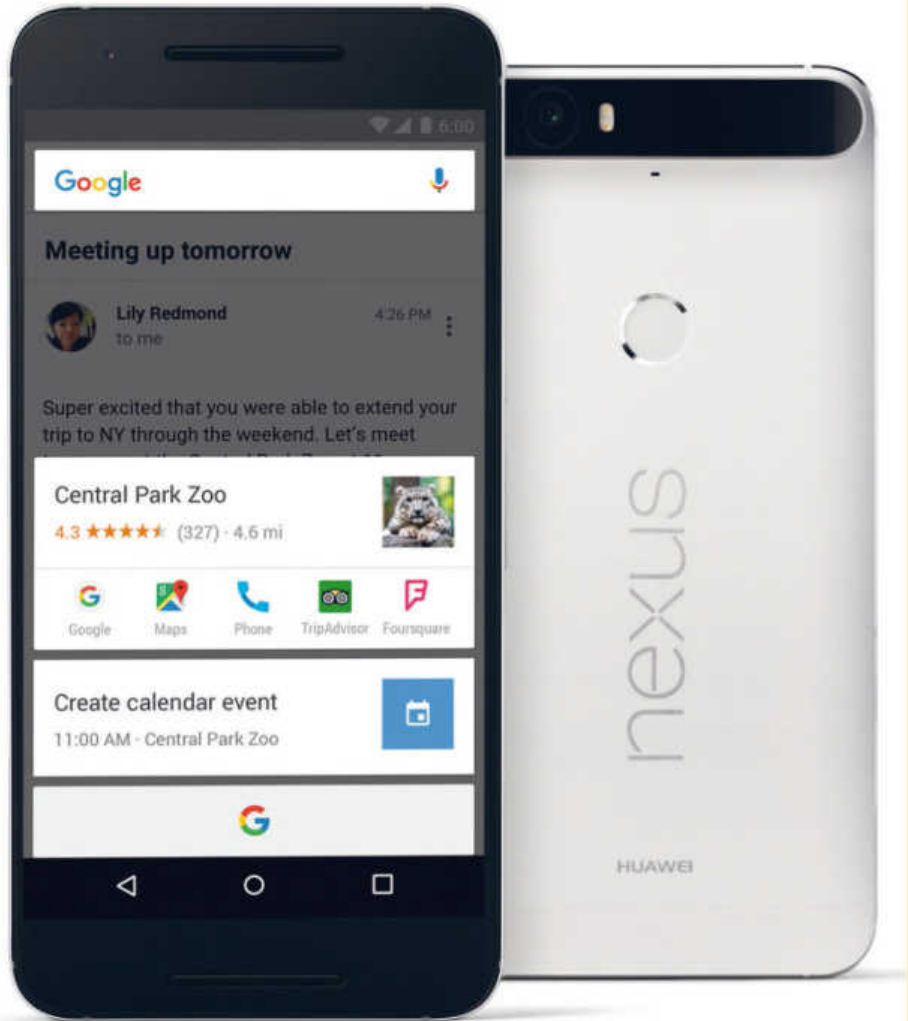
Ashot as... a microwaved sausage
£230 / pebble.com

HOT
FOUR
#3YOU HAVE
PERMISSION TO
BE AWESOMISED

Google Android 6.0

Amazingly enough, the revelation that the 'M' in 'Android M' is to be 'Marshmallow' isn't the most exciting bit of the new OS launch. Well, it was temporarily, but as of now we're more interested in what the new OS will bring. And the answer is many things. There are mildly obvious upgrades, like homescreen rotation and the virtual plumbing for Android Pay using any device's fingerprint scanner. There are geeky love-ins, like the process of accepting or declining individual access permissions on an app-by-app basis (sounds dull, but it gives you power over the likes of Facebook so, uh, yep). Then there are things that caused a murmur: apps and their data backing up automatically to Google Drive? Hmm. But as with most OS upgrades, it'll be the things you don't see that will make a big difference. Like the death of the 'Open in...' rigmarole, or seamless in-app Chrome tabs with full security and autofill. You'll just be happier with your phone, without really knowing why.

As hot as... a horizontal homescreen on your nightstand
Efree / android.com



OH, THERE'S HARDWARE ALRIGHT



NEXUS 5X

LG's latest Android task was a follow-up to the Nexus 5. The specs are lower, but so is the price. So, plastic body, 5.2in 1080p screen, hexa-core Snapdragon 808. But it gets a fingerprint sensor and Marshmallow from the get-go.
£340 (16GB), £380 (32GB) / lg.com



PIXEL C

Google's new supertab has a 10in 2K screen, an Nvidia Tegra X1 processor and USB-C. A funky US\$150 keyboard dock puts this squarely in opposition to Apple's new iPad Pro, which will go on sale around the same time.
from US\$500 / pixel.google.com



NEXUS 6P

Huawei is your hardware partner for the bigger and more upmarket of the two new Nexuses. The body is aluminium, the 5.7in screen is 2K, the processor is Snapdragon 810 and the RAM is 3GB. Pretty, pretty fancy.
from £450 (32GB) / huawei.com

**She bangs,
she bangs**

Bang & Olufsen speakers are turning up on all sorts of HP kit and they're in full effect here, adding yet more width to the Envy's 34in screen. To experience the other extreme of B&O kit, turn to p42.

**HOT
FOUR
#4****MINESWEEPER,
IMAX EDITION****HP Envy Curved
All-In-One**

Your boss is annoyed with your bi-weekly reports being submitted in a super-wide landscape format. "Clive," she'll say. "It's great that you worked on this over the weekend, and we've all enjoyed hearing about your new PC." (There's a curious strangled noise from one of your colleagues behind you.) "That you had your choice of Core i5 or i7, 128GB SSD or 1TB hybrid drive, and that you went for the proper Nvidia GeForce graphics card over the integrated option. Fascinating. But has it occurred to you that one of the advantages of having 3440 pixels of screen width is that you can work on normal portrait documents, but side by side?" She fears change, you think to yourself as you massage your neck.

**Ashotas... home-madered
cinema curtains**
E2000 / hp.co.uk



LG MUSICflow

SMART HI FI AUDIO
Wireless Multi-Room

LIVE IN
FLOWING
SOUND

LG's MUSICflow H4 Smart Hi-Fi Audio Speaker allows you to play music all over the home. A multi-room speaker, you can select songs easily thanks to the intuitive LG MUSICflow Player app*. Whilst with up to 8 hours of battery life** you can now take your favourite music to your best moments - hands-free, wirelessly.

Innovation For A Better Life

lg.com/uk/musicflow



Currys  PC World

*Available for Android, iOS and PC.

**Battery life usage varies



LG
Life's Good

SAFE AND FAST? X MARKS THE SPOT

Tesla Model X

£tba (due 2016) / teslamotors.com

The back doors only need 30cm of clearance to open. The driver's door also opens automatically when it senses you.



The groovy Falcon rear doors made it from concept to production, but will the Model X fly?

● **It won't fly.**

Elon Musk has manfully resisted the temptation to cross-pollinate the Model X SUV with his spaceship company SpaceX. Instead he seems hell-bent on being level-headed. Those sci-fi doors, which sense their surroundings and hinge open accordingly, are engineered for ease of access, not style. The wide, tall aperture they create simplifies getting babies (Musk rats?) into child seats,

while still getting adults into some of the other seven. The Model X will be safer than any big combustion engine SUVs, says Tesla, because of the lack of lump under the bonnet.

● **But it will be exciting.**

Strapped in your fam? Good, because like the Tesla Model S, the X is built on a base of batteries and boost: 0-62mph in less than five seconds for the base 90D, dropping to a headline-grabbing 3.2secs in the more powerful P90D. The figures are remarkable given that the Model X is a very heavy, very big car. But less remarkable if you know about electric motor

torque and, given the SUV pretensions, the standard all-wheel drive. Range is likely to be about 250 miles and, with about 30 Supercharger stations in the UK, you'll have noticed a distinct lack of dead Teslas in the news.

● **...and geeky.**

The 17in touchscreen of the Model S is inside, hurrah, and there's the expected cornucopia of steering assistance, braking assistance, parking assistance, etc. Unusually large HEPA air filters promise "hospital levels of cleanliness", say Tesla. By which, hopefully, it means like an operating theatre, not an A&E waiting room on a Friday night.

**0-62MPH IN
3.2 SECONDS IS
REMARKABLE
GIVEN THAT
THIS IS A
VERY HEAVY,
VERY BIG CAR**



MY OTHER CAR'S A...

● Honda 2&4

Looks like what Optimus Prime might blow out of his nose. An open-to-the-elements 405kg Ariel Atom rival, born out of a Honda internal competition to design a four-wheeler around the engine from a MotoGP bike.

£tba / honda.co.uk

● Jaguar F-Pace

Bentley's new Bentayga SUV is sold out already. And you saved up the £160,000, too. Luckily, Jaguar is introducing an SUV for the first time, and the BMW X3-sized F-Pace will take up less garage space.

from £34,200 / jaguar.co.uk

● Porsche Mission E

Porsche's first all-electric supercar. Using tech from the Le Mans-winning 919 and the 918 Spyder road car hybrid, the Mission E claims 0-62mph in 3.5secs, 600bhp and a range of over 300 miles.

£tba (concept) / porsche.com



Canons to the right of them CANON POWERSHOT G9 X

In the past if you wanted a small, powerful camera, you looked at the smaller end of the Canon/Nikon shelf. Now you have another five shelves to peruse, all heaving with Samsungs and Panasonics and Sonys, tiny system cams with huge DSLR lenses. And yet this handsome little Canon still makes a lot of sense, with a 3in touchscreen and a handy controlling for its bright f2.0 zoom lens. The 1in, 20.2MP sensor gives it enough light-lapping power to take on many larger system cameras, but it is genuinely pocketable. If you're a more serious snapper with a thing for manual control dials, the new G5 X (£630) adds a nice electronic viewfinder for framing shots properly.

£400 / canon.co.uk



Headphones fit for David SENNHEISER ORPHEUS

Sennheiser is 70, and as befits such a distinguished anniversary it has revived the Orpheus name for this special headphones/amp combo. The base is made from the same Carrara marble that Michelangelo liked to use for his sculptures. Turn it on and, with gentle drama, the eight valves rise up out of the base and a box section opens to reveal the headphones themselves. Enthralled? That's where the show ends, as details about the headphones are being kept under strict lock and key for now. Expect human-ear-baffling frequency response, a five-figure pricetag and to not see them in Argos. Followed by, hopefully, the tech they use filtering down to a more sensible level.

£tba / sennheiser.com

START MENU

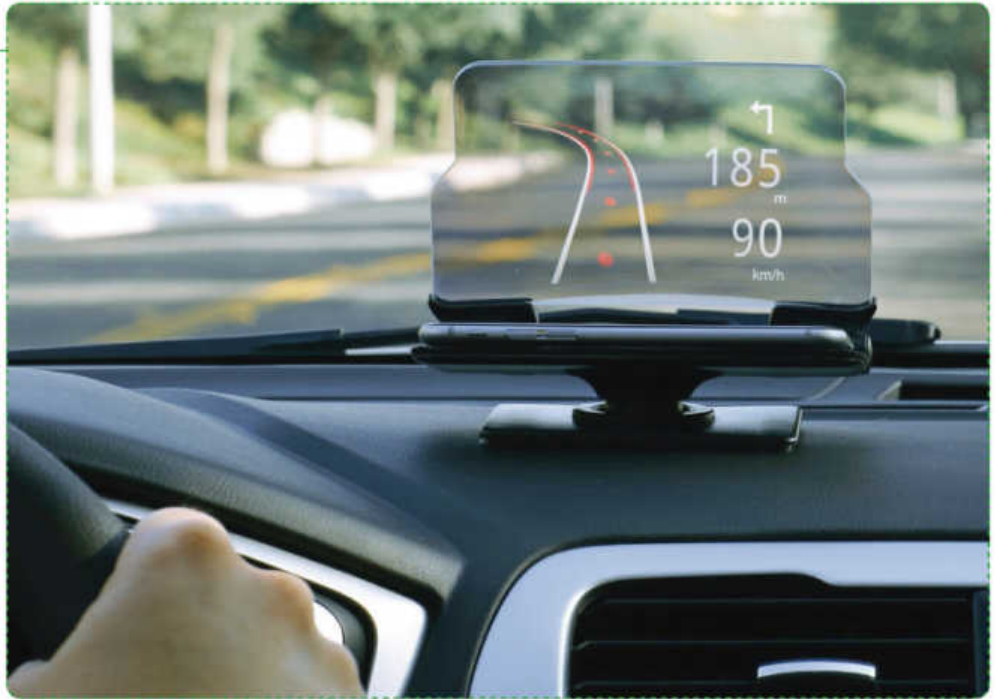
The latest startups, crowdfunded projects and plain crazy ideas

KICK-STARTER

Good reflections HUDWAY GLASS

The Hudway Glass is a highly affordable heads-up display for your car. Instead of adding another layer of tech – like Garmin's electronic heads-up device – it just uses ol' mother physics. You put your phone on the Glass's slip-free tray, where it reflects off the panel above. Simple. The company is coding a sat-nav app and an informatics app to use with it. (You can't, of course, just use any sat-nav app because it needs to be mirror-reversed on the phone screen.) To be honest, though, our favourite thing about this is that it forces you to put your phone away up front where it can't distract you from driving.

US\$50 / hudwayglass.com



BACK IT

STACK IT

SACK IT

KICK-STARTER

INDIE-GOGO

KICK-STARTER

KICK-STARTER



Hey, cool tent SIESTA4

Tents aren't best suited to festivals, really. No bathroom. But mainly because, once the sun comes up (ie: the time for festival goers to go to sleep), they quickly become too bright and hot. The Siesta4 has heat- and light-reflecting material, plus USB-powered fans. Bit pricey and vandal-attracting for a party tent, though.

from \$315 / outbacklogic.com



The necks big thing TINSEL

If you're a tech company and you want women to hate you, it's easy: just roll out a smaller, pinker version of a device you already make, and call it the Girl Edition. These wired Tinsel earphones are a more subtle sell: when not in use, they click together into a necklace. Which is pretty cool, if you like wearing the same necklace every day.

from \$150 / tinsel.me



Layering schmayering RAVEAN C6 HEATED JACKETS

Ravean are railing against the idea that heated jackets are bulky and inefficient. Which is quite a mountain to climb. But its heated hoodie, down jacket and gloves do look pretty snazzy, with 5V or 12V heating options and phone charging from the same battery. Hefty pre-order discounts, too.

from \$90 / ravean.com



Gram slam WEIGH TO FLY

At first glance, this might be shopping channel tat. But bear with us. It's a luggage scale that you place under your suitcase, showing a readout on your phone as you pack, including itself in the sums. It doubles as a clothes hanger and triples as a proximity alarm in case you walk away without your case. Come on! Useful, no?

£70 / weigh-to-fly



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Unlike other TV's, only OLED uses self-lighting pixel technology,
delivering a never before seen standard of black, colour and viewing angle.
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lg.com/uk/discoveroled

LG OLED TV

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

D7200

24.2
MEGAPIXEL

51
FOCUS
POINTS

ISO
100-25600
ISO RANGE

BUILT-IN WIFI



I AM AMBITION IN FOCUS

I AM THE NEW NIKON D7200. Start making big plans, because the D7200 is ready to push your potential to new heights. With the class-leading 51-point autofocus system inherited from Nikon's legendary professional cameras, you'll be faster and more agile than ever before. Capture a close shot of a race car taking a corner with extreme precision. Unveil the beauty of a skyline at sunset with a powerful 24.2 MP sensor and ISO up to 25600. Whatever your goals are, photos are easily shared with built-in Wi-Fi and NFC. Create a cinematic music video or a stunning time-lapse sequence. Discover how to raise the bar with the D7200.



Photo © Andrew Hancock

2YEAR
WARRANTY

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At the heart of the image



Oh, HTC, is it? You'd better come in **HTC ONE A9**

We recently got our hands on HTC's One M9+, the supercharged version of the M9. "Five stars," we said, and begged HTC to bring it to the UK. But it has not. We have not huffed, however; just gone off and pointedly played very loudly with some other phones. Now they're waving this about – are we bothered? Yes. For one, despite being a different family to the M9+, this will be the UK's first non-Nexus phone to get Android's Marshmallow OS. It's a sleek, rounded design – not dissimilar to an iPhone 6 – with a 5in 1080p screen, 13MP rear camera and Qualcomm Snapdragon 617 octa-core processor with 2GB RAM. Not a Samsung S6 smasher, then... but we're more than a bit interested.

Etba/htc.com/uk



Eyes that pop out of their sockets **LOGITECH CIRCLE**

It's post-heist debrief time, and Fingers McMullen has the conch. "I'm sorry the results were sub-optimal, guys. But you all saw the intel, right?" He flicks his pointer around the floorplan. "The cameras were supposed to be here, here and here. But they weren't. Hiro, what have you found out?" Chief technical officer Hiro Ito spins his VR goggles around and makes the 'brain splode' hand gesture. "Super-high-tech gear. A type of home security cam called the Logitech Circle. Motion detection, HD footage to your phone, daily resume – all that jazz. But here's the thing that ended us: you can take it off the cradle and it'll stream off its battery for three hours. Wherever. You. Leave. It. We've been outplayed."

£160/logi.com

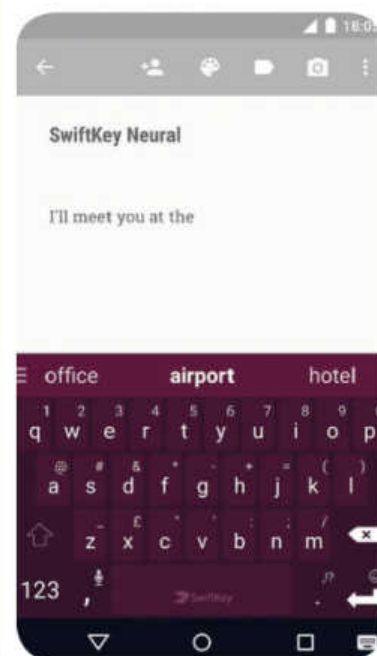


📱 DROP EVERYTHING & DOWNLOAD

SwiftKey Neural Alpha

Efree / Android

Just seeing the phrase 'Successfully installed SwiftKey Neural Alpha' is enough to make you feel like a character in a William Gibson book. Then there's the fact that, following the Google Deep Dream craze, everyone now associates a neural network with things composed almost entirely of eyes and dog parts. Which is a surreal thing to think is happening inside your phone. And lastly, while SwiftKey Neural is claimed to take word prediction to a higher, more context-aware level, it really just suggests the right thing almost all of the time. Which is what the non-neural version was/is considered amazing for doing. So it's a win-win-win. Download immediately! (iOS users: you made your choice.)

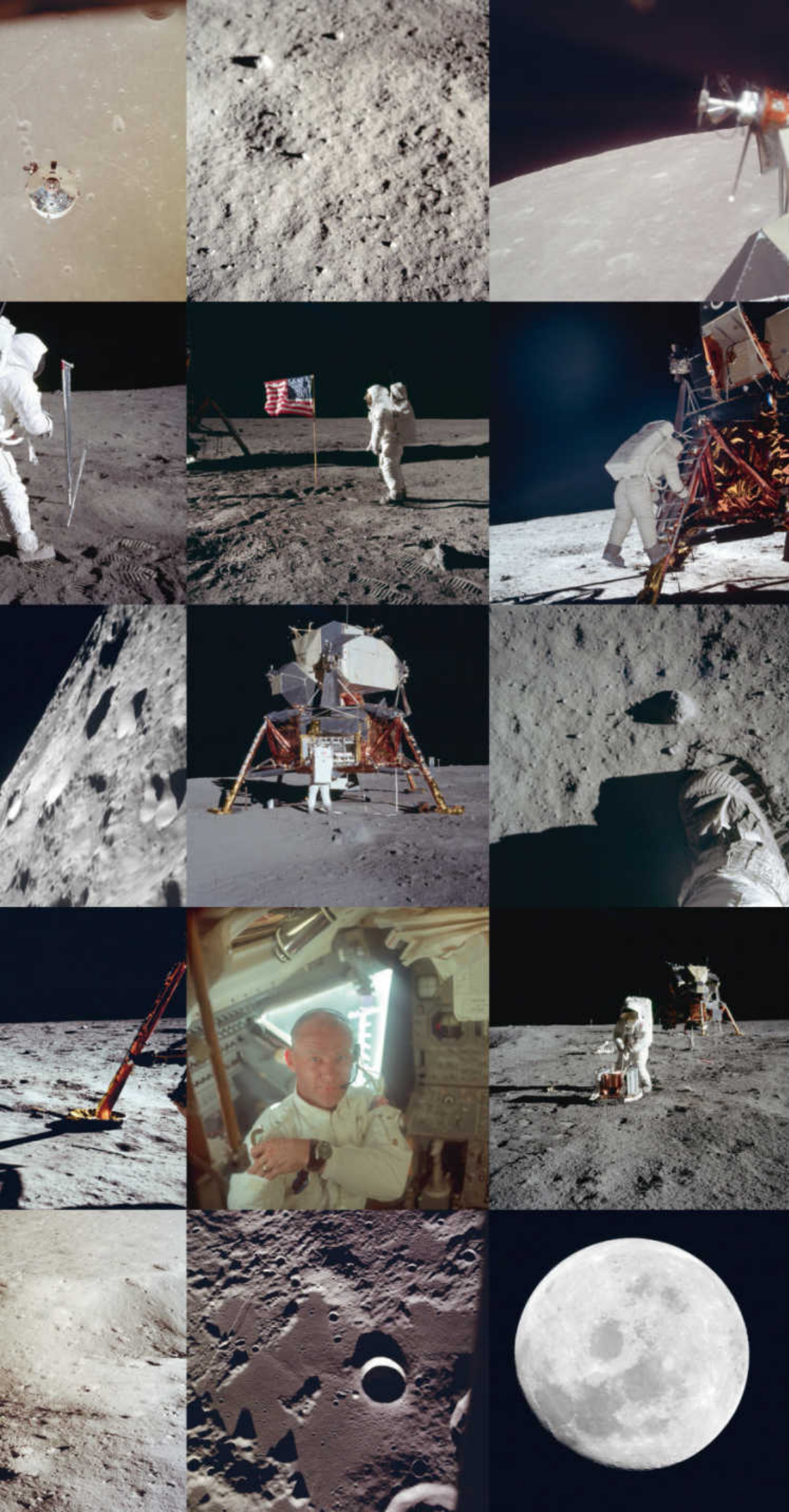


G I G A P I X E L

The bigger picture in tech

SPACE ROCKS

Tenacity comes as standard in the world of the conspiracy theorist. But even the remaining 'faked moon landings' faithful must surely be swayed by the more than 8000 high-res images just uploaded to NASA's Flickr feed ([flickr.com/photos/projectapolloarchive/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/projectapolloarchive/)). Every photo from the Apollo program is now freely browsable and downloadable. Once you've got to the umpteenth photo of a rock you'll think as we did: "You know what? They definitely did go. And I bet they would have loved to have had the Russians along, to help with the rock photography schedule."

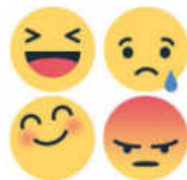


NEWS FEED



FREEVIEW CATCHES UP WITH CATCH-UP

The Freeview Play service has launched across the UK, giving satellite, cable and YouView haters up to seven days of historical catch-up TV. It's built in to some Panasonic TVs, and there's a Play-branded 500GB or 1TB Humax set-top box, starting at £200.



FACEBOOK DISLIKES DISLIKE BUTTON

Facebook has revealed a series of emojis called Reactions that can be clicked on instead of the Like button. Irish and Spanish users are trialling the update. In other over-sharing news, Twitter is said to be considering ditching the 140-character limit.



STRICTLY 360

From surround-sound radio to recording an HD TV series in the '80s, the BBC has always been a tech pioneer. Most recently, it's released a VR clip of *Strictly Come Dancing*, along with links to make or buy a VR headset (you can also just watch it on desktop). Give it a whirl at bbc.co.uk/taster

CATWALK AUDIO

High-design wireless speakers are just so hot right now

ANTI-DOCKWISE

Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Wireless

B&W has, once and for all, dropped the iOS dock from its tasty, shapely Zeppelin desktop speaker. It still has AirPlay but becomes the company's second Bluetooth speaker after the T7 portable. That'll cheer up Android users, while the inclusion of Spotify Connect will cheer up most everyone. B&W says it even sounds better than the old Zepp.

£500 / bowers-wilkins.com

HOLIER THAN THOU



KEF Muo

Sitting in between the Boom 2 and Zeppelin price points, and managing to be differently styled as well, the Muo has some interesting features to mark it out. It will alter its sound processing depending on whether it's horizontal or vertical. A pair of them can be linked as a stereo pair, like the Boom 2, but it also has a party-friendly mode where two are synced but playing the same output.

£300 / kef.com

PORTA-POWERHOUSE



UE Boom 2

Natty style and good sound have always been the bedfellows of the UE Boom. But now it'll have to sleep alone, because those guys have snuck off to create a four-in-a-bed scandal with the new UE Boom 2 and full IPX7 waterproofing. Saucy. The new version has tap-to-skip controls, for when you've lost your phone under the covers, and is a whopping 25% louder.

£170 / ultimateears.com



“Bold, different and deserves
to be seen by everyone.”

Wired



Empire

“Astonishing, breathtaking
and vastly entertaining.”

Vanity Fair



Total Film

“A masterpiece, plain and simple.”

Stuart McGurk-GQ

michael kate seth jeff
fassbender winslet rogen daniels

steve jobs¹⁵

from director danny boyle and screenwriter aaron sorkin

in cinemas november 13





So Pure. So Stylish. Solo.

Arcam's world-class reputation for state-of-the-art home cinema and high performance Hi-Fi systems has now been applied to a soundbar.

The new Solo bar plus and sub have been designed to make Arcam's legendary sound quality accessible to a wider audience, setting a new standard for music and movie reproduction from a soundbar.

For more information on these landmark products or to find your nearest stockist visit www.arcam.co.uk

ARCAM
solo bar^{PLUS}

ARCAM
Bringing music and movies to life

Electric COBOC ECYCLE

The electric bike market has developed a special new allure: maturity. Gone are the frills and flaunts of excessively high power or unnecessarily long range. With the battery built in to the downtube and the motor in the rear-wheel hub, the Coboc looks like a normal bicycle. (If the riding position looks a little racy, then Coboc has a more laid-back version planned for 2016.) The eCycle only weighs 13.5kg, and can go up to 50 miles on a two-hour charge.

£3300 / coboc.co.uk



WTF? A bike that'll shoulder up to 45kg

Eclectic HORSE SIDE CAR BIKE

If some of the current fore- or aft-mounted cargo bikes seem slightly difficult to manoeuvre, then marvel at the cycle-lane-spanning girth of this three-wheeler. Mind you, it does mean you can carry long loads, such as a surfboard or a Billy bookcase. And it is beautifully constructed in a workshop in Brooklyn, a town where they can get their head around a concept as tricky as a bicycle called a Horse.

US\$4500 / horsebrand.co



FUTURE STUFF 3D-PRINTED TRAINERS

Esat Dedezade dreams of shoes fit for print

We've yet to see a 3D printer in every home... wait, that should read "We've yet to see a 3D printer in any home." Still, the prospects for the technology continue to be interesting.

Eric Sprunk, Nike's COO, recently waxed lyrical at a GeekWire summit about a future in which customers can 3D print their own trainers. Sprunk described how customers could purchase printing files from Nike's website for home printing, or failing that, head down to a Nike store where it would

be printed out for you. Quick as a flash, Adidas announced that very thing: Futurecraft 3D is a trainer with a 3D-printed midsole – "a flexible, fully breathable carbon copy of the athlete's own footprint". The proprietary process, developed with Materialise, involves a bunion-mapping run on a treadmill. It's still at concept stage but is, according to Adidas's Eric Liedtke, "a statement of intent".

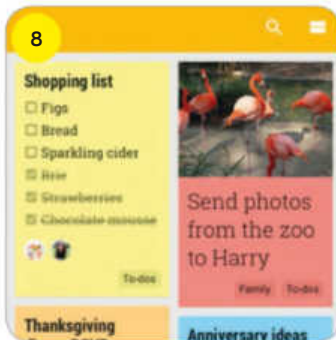
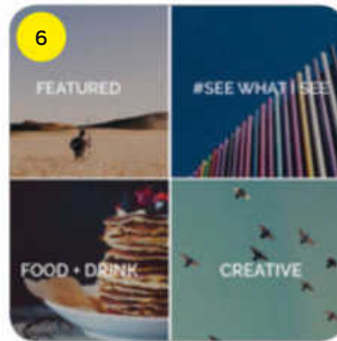
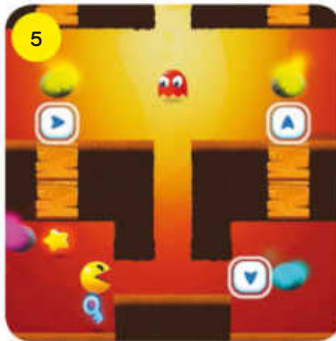
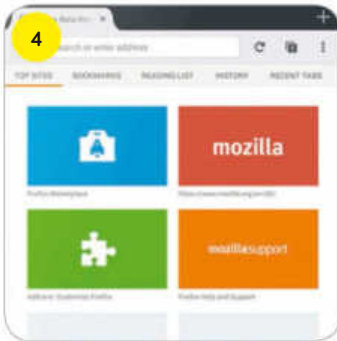
The upper parts and rubber sole of the shoe would still have to be mated with the printed midsole, which is a bummer. My own

custom-runners dream sees me hobbling into the shop on shredded sneakers then bouncing out a few minutes later, good for another few hundred miles.

Back to Nike, whose Flyknit trainers are already forged almost entirely by a machine that follows instructions to literally knit the footwear together. If that process and the creation of the midsole could be combined, I'd be close to having my future-pump dreams realised. Which, given the state of my knees, can't come soon enough.

↓ APPS

This month's mobile must-downloads



1 Mini Motor Racing WRT

£free / iOS, Android

Ah, *Micro Machines*, how fondly we remember thee! Although, looking back at screenshots from the '90s, you were a bit rubbish. We'll take this modern top-down racer instead, even with its freemium nonsense.

2 AmpMe

£free / iOS, Android

Here's an intriguing idea. AmpMe lets you group together the tinny speakers on several smartphones to make one synced tinny cacophony. It only works with SoundCloud; more services to follow.

3 BlockQuest

£free / iOS, Android

A familiar graphics style – *Crossy Road*, anyone? – doesn't detract from this being a madcap RPGer. Not one for turn-based strategists, though: you're moving and puzzle-solving against the clock.

4 Mozilla Firefox

£free / Android

The latest Firefox for Android adds a couple of niceties like improved tabs and bookmark management as well as multi-platform sync. In the next update, we're promised unrivalled privacy settings.

5 Pac-Man Bounce

£free / iOS, Android

Our beloved pixel-muncher is kind of borrowed for this only slightly *Pac-Man* puzzler. Align the bounce pads to make him change direction, clearing each level of stars while avoiding mishaps and miscreants.

6 Steller

£free / iOS

If lobbing a bunch of photos onto Facebook doesn't feel like enough narrative of your trip, Steller is an app that lets you quickly create an onscreen photobook. The new version is streamlined and tweaked.

7 Murder

£free / iOS, Android

We're looking forward to playing this cyberpunk point-and-click adventure. It's set in Tokyo so we should probably stop pronouncing it 'molder' like we're some kind of noirish New York detective. Molder.

8 Google Keep

£free / iOS

Imagine 'Wait for iOS version' was a to-do list item in our Android phone's Google Keep app. And now imagine us prodding the check box... on an iOS device! Done. (Why do we have two phones?)

9 Dead Zone: Zombie War Deluxe

£free / Android

You're going to have to be an awfully big fan of zombie games to endure the painfully translated text of this undead-flummoxing strategy romp.

NOT JUST AN APP

iRIG KEYS

from €130 /
iOS, Android,
PC, Mac



There are so few on-the-move opportunities for sparkly-fingered ivory-ticklers.

Unless, of course, you routinely travel with a piano, which must get to be a real bore after a while. Our friends at IK Multimedia, fortunately, continue to persevere at their lot in life, which is the easy connection of musical instruments to phones and tablets. (They, you'll recall, are the makers of the iRig guitar adaptor.) And now they've re-released the iRig Keys (£130) and iRig Keys Pro (£150) portable controller keyboards. Both now come with an Android-compatible microUSB-OTG cable, giving you yet more ways to roll out your heartstring-twangling version of *Candle in The Wind*.



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PC World

DUE
FEB

FIRST LOOK FAR CRY PRIMAL PS4, Xbox One, PC

In recent years, the *Far Cry* series has done a fine job of taking gamers on semi-regular holidays to tropical locations. Sure, you often find yourself fighting off vicious honey badgers with your bare hands, or accidentally joining an armed rebellion against a warlord, but that's just part of living like a local, right?

But Ubisoft's latest excursion isn't just in a different continent, it takes place in an entirely different time. *Primal* is set in the Mesolithic period of around 10,000BC, where it's sabretooth

tigers and woolly mammoths you have to worry about, not some pesky woodland critter (although admittedly one with a very bad temper).

That means your position on the food chain is far more precarious than normal, as you'll have to hunt to survive, using whatever primitive weaponry you can craft from foraged wood, stones and bits of old bone. It's a long way from the rocket launchers you used to conquer Kyrat in *FC4*.

You play as Takkar, the only surviving member of a clan,

which makes you an easy target for other tribes looking to nick all the stuff you've hoarded.

If previous *Far Cry* games are anything to go by, you'll probably find yourself dabbling in the supernatural, although with the internal combustion engine and even the bicycle still a few thousand years from being invented, it'll be interesting to see how Ubisoft deals with traversing the land of Oros's high peaks and vast forests without vehicular assistance. But then that's all in a day's work for a Stone Age homo sapiens.



FIRST PLAY

DARK SOULS 3

PS4, Xbox One, PC

Good news for masochists: punishing RPG *Dark Souls* is back for another instalment of teeth-gnashing swordplay – and we've been hacking (and dying) our way through a few of its notoriously tough baddies.

The classic gameplay – block, dodge, slash, die – has had a few tweaks. Heavy attacks now land more quickly, making them more viable and ever so slightly lowering the skill bar – but that's not to say every encounter won't put you through the wringer.

What will be welcome for less adept players is the way it rewards experimentation. After repeatedly being skewered like an armour-clad kebab by a nasty knight, leading him into the path of a fire-breathing dragon proved vital in disposing of him, as did attacking a demon mid-transformation. Whether the same lateral thinking works against the bosses remains to be seen.

In spite of the thorough pasting received during our time with it, *Dark Souls 3* is shaping up to be a very satisfying mountain to climb – as long as you're prepared to die over and over and over again.



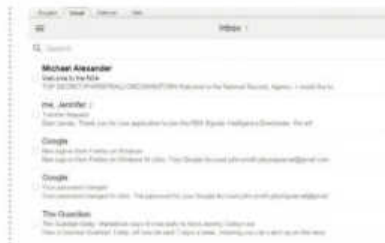
[Words Justin Mahboubian-Jones]

CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUR KICKSTARTER CASH



HOME FREE PS4, PC, MAC

Recent simulator games have allowed us to experience life as a goat, a rock and a slice of bread, but the one we've all been clamouring for is finally coming. *Home Free* is a stray dog sim. You can steal food from humans, do tricks to impress them, forage in bins in procedurally generated streets, and fight for territory with other hounds.



TOP SECRET EMAIL

Edward Snowden's exposure of the NSA's spying isn't the first thing you'd think to make a game about, but then you could've said the same about passport control and look at *Papers, Please*. *Top Secret* involves you sending actual emails in real time, in an attempt to find out who's leaking documents to the press.



FRIDAY THE 13TH

PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

This has been given a Hollywood boost by snaring the official licence to feature iconic movie baddie Jason Voorhees. You'll play as either the madman himself, or one of the seven naive teens he's trying to turn into mincemeat, in *Evo/ve*-style multiplayer chases around Camp Crystal Lake.

INCOMING

JANUARY

● LEGO MARVEL'S AVENGERS

FEBRUARY

● BATTLEBORN

● MIRROR'S EDGE CATALYST

● DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED

● XCOM 2

MARCH

● TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION

● UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END





? WTF IS THE LIGHT L16?

Must. Find. Pattern.

Annoying, isn't it? You probably spotted pretty quickly that those are camera lenses, but before your modern brain even asked why there are so many of them, your primal brain cried out at the randomness of their placement. And then your modern brain said it's something to do with how it works. And then this other brain, put there by the government, suggested it's to do with their physical layout on the device's PCB. And you were like, *who said that?*

Quite. So why all the lenses?

Sixteen! The aim of the L16 is to capture DSLR-like quality photos, but in a form factor that can easily slip into your pocket. The lenses have different focal lengths from 35mm to 150mm. Combined into one shot by clever software, the resulting image is a whopping 52MP of detail; but cleverer yet is the ability to change the focus point of the image, Lytro-style.

They all look quite tiny, though.

Low-light shooting is also taken care of by the software, which decides the best combination of lenses for the light reading and sorts the final exposure using wizardry. At this point, camera purists will be screaming their safe word and running for their lens cupboard just to be reassured by some big bits of light-loving glass.

Yeah, the L16's probably not for those guys.

No, indeed — a point further reinforced by the device's lack of physical controls. Only the shutter release button is 'real'. Everything else is handled by the on-screen touchscreen controls. It must be the devil's work.

So, DSLR quality claimed. DSLR price demanded?

Yep. Early birds can reserve one for US\$1300 until 6 November, after which the price will shoot up to US\$1700. It won't be out until next summer, mind you, so if you're probably in the 'many lenses do not make light work' camp, it might be safer to wait for the reviews.



Four legs good again SAMSUNG SERIF

The other night, when you woke up for seemingly no good reason... it was the globe-spanning 'crunk' of a completed revolution. The moment when tellies went from boxes on legs to tabletop stands to wall-mounted slivers and now back to boxes on legs. Samsung's new Serif TV, co-created by French designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, is destined to stand on its own four legs and serve as a definite object in the room. You can even, horror of horrors, put things on top of it. There'll be three models — a 4K 40in, a 1080p 32in and a 720p 24in — and if you were to put us in a corner and force an opinion out of us, we'd have to say that we rather like it.

from £500 (preorder) / samsung.com

The Iron 883 benefits from a new rolled leather seat: comfortable rebellion for all.



A bike called dignity HARLEY-DAVIDSON IRON 883

'Mid-life crisis' is the phrase that leaps to the lips of people upon hearing that you've bought a Harley-Davidson. We disagree. A mid-life crisis would be submitting yourself to the arrogant salesmen and cackling groupies in the showrooms of Ducati, Yamaha and Honda. H-D shop staff, on the other hand, are more likely to treat you with some dignity, knowing that you're just a normal person who wants to get some flies on your teeth. And while Harleys can be pricey, this entry-level Iron gets new adjustable suspension and lighter wheels for 2016, with bags of character for not much cash. To hell with the naysayers.

from £7500 / harley-davidson.com



Zeppelin Wireless.
Next level audio
performance.

Bowers & Wilkins

BACKPACKS

Flapjacks. In backpacks.
Are coming down
the stairs...

1 Reef Diamond Tail III

Leaving your wet swim kit in a poly bag for your mum to deal with – those days are sadly past. Thankfully, this travel-tough Reef ruckie has a dedicated wet area, complete with drainage.

£70 / reef.com

2 Evoc FR Trail Team

The human spine faces the wrong way, so it's the last to know when you're about to hit something hard. Thankfully, this mountain bikers' bag also has a CE-certified back protector built in.

£115 / evocsports.com

3 Patagonia Lightweight Travel Tote Pack

Made of super-light fabric, the Travel Tote can still fold out its tiny pocket into a rucksack or twin-handled tote bag.

£60 / patagonia.com

4 Crumpler Light Delight Folding Camera Bag

With a cheer and a jig and a hey zippy zip, this Crumpler transforms from a padded camera waistbag to a rucksack.

£70 / crumpler.eu

5 Vulpine Laptop Commuter Backpack

Is it possible to focus on true minimalism? Can you try really hard to not include fussy details? Either way, only a laptop sleeve and key clip made the cut here.

£150 / vulpine.cc

6 Rapha Backpack in Chilli

The Rapha Backpack justifies its pricetag with loads of neat touches and details. If the Chilli colour is too garish for you, it also comes in blue and black.

£150 / rapha.cc





**THE PEACE AND
QUIET YOUR
MUSIC DESERVES**

AKG | **N60^{NC}**



Hear no evil. The AKG N60NC headphones feature 30 hours of battery life and deliver Grammy award-winning AKG superior sound while also utilizing best in class active noise cancelling to minimize the disruptive sounds encountered when travelling. Accented with premium materials, this unparalleled listening experience comes magnificently packaged in elegantly crafted lightweight headphones that provide both viewing and listening pleasure.

Find out more at akg.com

See the Great, Feel the Great

LG G4



See the Great
Feel the Great

The Visibly Smart LG G4

Stuff
★★★★★

LG G4, Stuff.tv, May 2015



Combining style with substance, the hotly anticipated LG G4 delivers a truly breathtaking visual experience. Featuring a pro-quality 16MP camera with an F1.8 aperture lens and 8MP front-facing camera for 'super selfies', you'll be able to capture professional-looking pictures that 'pop' with detail and clarity. Combine this with the stunning IPS Quantum Quad HD Display, and the G4 will be your perfect smartphone companion to capture and enjoy the moments that matter to you.

Available in-store and online now

www.lg.com/uk/G4



LG
Life's Good



This bowl of GoPro is just right GOPRO HERO+

Ah, the old Goldilocks movement – we've all been caught out by it. First, GoPro launched the baby of the affordable Hero range, with no screen and no wireless. Then a wee bit later it launched the daddy of the range, the Hero+ LCD. And now, when we've all swung one way or the other, GoPro meekly drops the middle guy: the Hero+. It doesn't have the LCD screen, but it does have Wi-Fi and Bluetooth for footage sharing and camera control. And it gets a spec upgrade over the basic Hero: the Hero+ has 1080p/60fps and 8MP stills.

Just right, assuming there's still anyone left to buy one.

£170 / gopro.com



The big hand is pointing to the... time KLOKERS KLOK-01

Rule-busting is what got this ragtag species of ours where it is. We're not suggesting that making the numbers go around the hands is the kind of revolution that will advance humanity, but its slide-rule aesthetic sure is pretty. The Kickstarted KLOK-01 also adheres to the current trend of being able to pop off its strap in seconds. Where you put the battery-powered, waterproof watch part next is up to you: Kloklers will sell you other coloured straps or a watch chain or, soon, a desk stand. But put it wherever. There are no rules. And we wouldn't have it any other way, right?

€350 / kloklers.com



Water wheels HONDA FCV

Slowly but surely, production hydrogen cars are gradually becoming a real option. Hyundai has started selling ix35 Fuel Cell models and there's a near-as-dammit-ready Toyota Mirai drifting about in Europe somewhere. Honda, meanwhile, following up from its FCX Clarity test cars, has just released the first image of the production FCV, due to hit Japanese roads in March 2016 and the UK in 2017. Should be a few more hydrogen refuelling stations by then, we hope.

Etba (due 2017) / honda.co.uk

About 140bhp and a 400-mile range might not sound like the future, but it only emits water.



BANG & OLUFSEN BEOLAB 90

£27,000 / bang-olufsen.com

Those speakers are so disarmingly directionless.

Don't you think the Daleks would have been a lot more creepy if they didn't have an obvious front? If they were just a bobbly cylinder, from which death might emanate at any point? But knowing that humans have a basic need for things to have a front, the BBC's effects wizard gave the Daleks a snouty 'face' to relate to. It's the same reason that speaker

manufacturers, for eons, have been making speakers with an obvious direction: to alleviate nightmares. Although it might also be something to do with sound.

Probably. But that doesn't seem to have bothered B&O.

Very little bothers the king of Scandinavian audio. Especially in its 90th anniversary year, the culmination of which is this celebratory wants-for-nothing

BeoLab 90 digital uber-speaker. It weighs about as much as a motorbike and underneath that deliberately directionless design lie 18 speaker drivers, facing every which way but loose. Complex software measures the room that the speaker is in and adjusts the output to suit. You can also make use of 'beam width control' to adjust whether you want a traditional hi-fi audio sweet spot or all-encompassing party sound.

Ain't no-one doing no partying near my £27k speakers.

Speaker, singular. That price tag is 'per unit'. But there's a whole load of tech on board to justify its cost. As well as a huge amount of digital amplification, each speaker has RCA, XLR, USB and digital optical connections hidden behind one of the oak panels. High-res audio up to 24-bit/192kHz is supported, naturally. Might we suggest, as a kick-off, Orbital's *Doctor*?

THIS IS BANG & OLUFSEN'S
90TH BIRTHDAY
PRESENT TO ITSELF





In one ear ONKYO W800BT

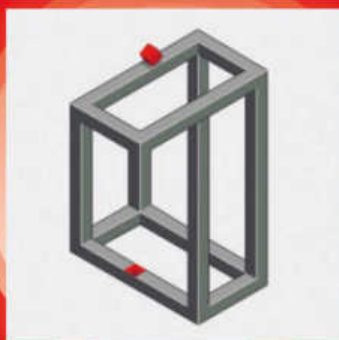
Music, they say, be the food of love. It be also the way of not hearing damn-fool tripe other people be spouting, say we. And so, despite our 'travel light' mantra, we are prepared to extend a little bit of loadspace to these Onkyo W800BT earphones. Unlike most other lightweight Bluetooth noiseniks, they are, as you can see, entirely unjoined by cable or wire. Instead they connect wirelessly with a phone and with each other, protecting us from strangers' mouth-guff with a beaver-dam of intermingled music and physical isolation. Battery life be not great – they promise 12 hours yet ours lasted only six – but we be not hanging around.

€300 / onkyo-headphones.com

And in the other JABRA ECLIPSE

Given the density of city commuters these days (and we mean 'density' very much in both senses of the word), we like to hit the metropolis light and lithe, like a lanolin-slathered polecat. Packing nothing more than a phone and a creepy little business card holder, we duck and dive through the human traffic with Bullet Time rapidity and, on the rare occasions that we have to call ahead to explain a delay, we do it on Jabra's lightest ever Bluetooth headset. At 5.5g it weighs less than one of the tassels on our Italian loafers, and yet its battery can handle (an entirely unnecessary) ten hours of talk.

£80 / jabra.co.uk



DROP EVERYTHING AND DOWNLOAD...

hocus. £0.79 / iOS

Getting on for two years have passed since we suddenly became obsessed by the isometric emotional experience that was *Monument Valley*. People who disliked it generally turned their noses up because they said it was too simple. They are not going to like *hocus.*, which takes the baffling 2D/3D puzzle element and focuses entirely on it. Guiding your featureless cube along

the pathways is done by swiping. There's no shape rotation, no enemies, no push buttons: just you and the cube and all the time in the world to figure out how to get it to the exit. Sounds boring? Banal? Mind-numbing, even? Just wait 'til it gets its hooks in you. At just 79p for 50 levels, you're looking at one hell of a lot of bang – not to mention head-banging frustration – for your buck.



One small step for shaving. One giant leap for sensitive skin.

Introducing the new Philips Shaver series 7000, specially designed for sensitive skin. Its comfort glide rings with anti-friction coating reduces skin irritation, redness and razor burn.* Feel the difference.

Built for you, whatever your mission.

innovation  you



Dermatologically tested

Series 7000
Shaver

*vs. Philips predecessor range

PHILIPS



available at Boots
Order by 8pm and collect for free tomorrow from midday.



let's feel good

See www.boots.com/ordertodaycollecttomorrow for full terms & conditions about the Order & Collect service. Geographical exclusions apply.



1



2



3

3

STEPS

...to pisting about

Long John Gold

1 BURTON MIDWEIGHT UNION SUIT

If you're about to take your entirely breakable body into an environment that breaks bodies all year round, and if in that mountainous terrain you plan to go fast and throw yourself off stuff, you'll need to feel secure. Not drafty, damp and uncoordinated, but snug inside a dramatic one-piece baselayer, confident in its Dryride Ultrawick fabric and Softlock seams. That said, it's still best to wear something over the top.

£70 / burton.com

Levelling out your awesomeness

2 XSORIES X-STEADY ELECTRO

"Why bother trying to stabilise your videos using your in-built biomechanical systems if you can have motors do it for you?" An increasingly common question, as the DJI Osmo on p48 attests. The X-Steady Electro is a simpler, more affordable beast: a single-axis electronic gimbal for your GoPro, camera or phone. It will work to keep the camera on a level horizon, with a battery life of almost one and a half hours.

€220 / xsories.co.uk

Walk? This way...

3 APEX SKI BOOTS

The whole point of rigid ski boots is to turn an expensive and exhausting activity into a hilarious family anecdote about when Dad slipped and threw four plates of frites all over a German grandma. But the biggest secret of the American ski scene has come to the UK. Rather than having an awkward plastic shell, Apex ski boots have a snowboard-style soft boot that slips into a frame. That's a lot of discomfort dispelled for a modicum of lost responsiveness.

from £520 / ellis-brigham.com



Mission: control

Hair cutting that's out of this world from the new Philips Hair clipper series 9000. The world's first digital swipe system with over 400 length settings, for ultimate precision. Patented dual cut technology speeds through hair and self-lubricating blades mean zero maintenance.

Built for you, whatever your mission.

innovation + you



World's
1st
digital
swipe

Series 9000
Hair clipper

PHILIPS



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Order by 8pm and collect for
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let's feel good

See www.boots.com/ordertodaycollecttomorrow for full terms & conditions about the Order & Collect service. Geographical exclusions apply.

Smart luxury is a selection of products that offer just that little bit extra: flawless performance, elegant design, dynamic technology - or a combination of them all.



NEW



NODE 2 • POWNODE 2 • VAULT 2 • PULSE • PULSE MINI • PULSE FLEX

THE NEXT GENERATION OF **BLUESOUND**

Take hi-fi to even new heights with Bluesound's next generation. Features improved wi-fi performance, more digital and analog connectivity options and Bluetooth aptX along with support for premium music services like Tidal and Spotify.

Prices from £269

PODSPEAKERS MINIPOD BLUETOOTH

BLUETOOTH SPEAKERS

Based on the timeless Podspeakers design, the addition of premium apt-X Bluetooth connectivity makes the MiniPod Bluetooth a great addition to the iconic Podspeakers range. These active stereo speakers also include minijack, USB and optical inputs and a 192 kHz 24-bit DAC.

£499

GLOSS RED GLOSS BLACK GLOSS WHITE



NEW



NEPTUNE BLUE
STORM GREY
LIGHT SILVER
HORIZON GOLD
SUNSET ORANGE

KEF MUO

BLUETOOTH SPEAKER

Packed with innovative technologies to deliver uncompromised KEF quality sound when you're streaming music wirelessly from a computer or mobile device. Muo packs a punch that is out of all proportion to its size.

£299.95



NEW

B&W ZEPPELIN WIRELESS WIRELESS SPEAKER SYSTEM

Introducing the Zeppelin Wireless. The instantly recognisable silhouette may be the same, but every element of the speaker has been redesigned to deliver superlative audio performance; once again redefining what is possible from a single speaker system.

£499.99



NEW

ADVERT VALID UNTIL 18/11/2015. E&OE
SOME BRANDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN ALL STORES.

B&W P5 WIRELESS BLUETOOTH HEADPHONES

P5 performance, no wires. P5 Wireless with aptX Bluetooth sets a new standard for audio quality and convenience. With universal compatibility, 17 hour battery and P5's award-winning drivers and materials, wireless Hi-Fi headphones are here at last.

£329



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NEW

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25 STORES NATIONWIDE WWW.SSAV.COM

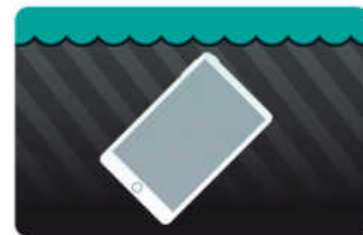


Between you and the final straw PURE EVOKE F3

Picture the scene: You're in the kitchen, you're cooking, the oven's playing up and the kids are rampaging. The song on the Bluetooth speaker is annoying you so you reach for your phone to change it. Instead, you see a text from your partner saying they're going to be late home. Instead of changing the track, you snap. You walk out of that kitchen and never return. Now imagine that, instead of a Bluetooth speaker, you had this colour-screened Pure Evoke streaming Spotify Connect, Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. You'd have changed the track on it, not seen your phone, not got in a rage and not abandoned your family. Music for thought, isn't it?

£130 / pure.com

DECIPHER ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN...



#8 INGRESS PROTECTION

Fraser Macdonald



Gadget and component makers love buzzy terminology. The phrase

'aerospace-grade aluminium' is factually correct... but still irritating. The grades of aluminium alloy that are used in planes are also used to make fairly mundane things. So your shiny iPhone 6s uses 'bicycle-grade aluminium'. Whoop.

Anyway, the misappropriation I want to clear up here is the Ingress Protection (IP) ratings assigned to products that are in some way rugged or water-resistant. The most confusing part is that the two digits in, say, an IP68 rating refer to two different aspects.

The first number (6) refers to protection against solid objects like dust or sand, measured from 0 to 6. The second, from 0 to 9, is for water. When quoting the rating, manufacturers often omit the irrelevant digit and replace it with an X,

IN 'IP68', THE TWO NUMBERS REFER TO DIFFERENT PROOFS: DUST AND WATER

describing something as 'waterproof to IPX8'. Obviously, that doesn't mean the product has no dust resistance – in this case, 'X' just equals 'not bothered'.

One final bit of confusion and then we're done. The water ratings aren't linear. Wiki up 'IP Code' and you'll see that '5', '6' and '9' ratings have to do with jets of water, '7' and '8' with immersion. Sony, bless it, has thus taken it upon itself to describe its Xperia phones as being both IP65 and IP68.

It's the kind of confusion-compounding pedantry some people get a kick out of. Not me. I'm off to find out what Gorilla Glass has to do with gorillas.

WTF? Twin-wheeled street surfer



Concrete-carving dignity-stripper RAZOR RIPSURF

In the dungeons of the *Stuff* castle, there's a room where wheely things go to die. Unicycles, electric skateboards and even a Sinclair C5: these are the relics of good but injurious times. One of last year's highlights was the Crazy Cart – You Tube it only if you are ready to find yourself immediately scratching around for the £400 to buy one – and its creator now has a new thing. The RipSurf runs on two rollerblade-wheeled casters, with enough flex in the board that you can, with youthful hip movement, gain propulsion without having to push with your feet. You can carve along on one wheel and smash into furniture – or parked cars – with abandon.

approx £70 / razor.com

THE CAMERA THAT LETS YOU DO THE FLYIN'

DJI Osmo

£550 / dji.com

Worried that all these dronecams are going to stop you using your jetpack? Say hi to Osmo.

● **Maybe it's the red tape...**

Watching the legal eagles sticking their beaks into all aspects of personal and commercial drone flying, you can imagine DJI being keen to launch a camera that doesn't need a licence. Or, more likely, it's seen the opportunity to get its camera and stabilising gimbal tech into people's hands for a reasonable price. Either way, the Osmo is DJI's 4K Zenmuse X3 camera, sitting on top of a three-axis gimbal, sitting on top of a handheld control stick. Tripod and accessory mounts, extension arms and a bike mount give you shooting options if you need your hands free. Those jetpacks don't fly themselves.

● **It's well quality.**

You can buy a naked Osmo and mount any of DJI's cameras, but the one that comes bundled here has a 1/2.3in Sony Exmor R CMOS sensor coupled to a 20mm, f/2.8 lens with a 94° field of view. Video quality options are comprehensive: 4096x2160 4K at 24fps or 3840x2160 4K at 30fps; plus up to a slow-mo-tastic 120fps in 1080p. Stills are 12MP, and DJI points out that the gimbal stabilisation lets you take creative long-exposure shots with the camera held in your wobbly hand.

● **Enjoy direct directing.**

Controls on the pole let you take advantage of the motors in the gimbal. There's an auto photo panorama mode, for example. But you can also manually control the camera – you are the drone now, after all. But if you insist: –35° to 135° tilt, 320° of pan and –50° to 90° of roll are all under your thumb. If you can do that and still shoot straight while, say, riding on the back of a dolphin, we will buy you a pint. (A safe bet for us: the Osmo isn't waterproof.)

There's a stereo mic built in to Osmo, but also a 3.5mm jack for an external one.

WE'VE SEEN
GOPRO FANS
WITH HANDHELD
GIMBALS, BUT
THE OSMO IS
THE FIRST ONE-
BOX OPTION



LYRIC | STREAMING
AUDIO
SYSTEM

EXPERIENCE THE
SOUNDTRACK
OF YOUR LIFE

AT **richer
SOUNDS***



Lyric is the complete audio solution developed by multi-award winning Cyrus.
For further details and to see what the reviewers say visit www.cyruslyric.com
*Also available at other retailers.

CYRUS



YOUR MONTH NOV

Remember, remember, the fifth of November. And these dates too...



3

THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS

Stephen King
If, like us, you find that full-length horror fiction winds you up into an unapproachable jitterbomb, then a sessionable short stories collection such as this might be manageable. Begin. No? Aieee! Finish. Reset.



12

WALES RALLY GB

If, like us, you'll take any excuse to go into the woods and see cars fly (see also Hip Flasks, November issue), then this season's ever-increasing World Rally success of Brits Kris Meeke and Elfyn Evans (pictured) will surely do it.



15

ATP WORLD TOUR FINALS

See Djokovic and Murray lock horns in a weatherproof O2 Arena tennis mega-event, and be happy... if, like us, you feel that the poshness of Wimbledon is de-dignified by all-night ticket queues and rain.



19

THE SANDMAN: OVERTURE DELUXE EDITION

Neil Gaiman, JH Williams III
Do you perennially forget that you like graphic novels? Try this collected edition of the new *Sandman: Overture* prequel series... if, not like us, you can recall the original *Sandman* plots.



27

BRIDGE OF SPIES

Shot down over enemy lines — we've all been there. But this Spielberg-directed true story about the 1960s U-2 affair — scripted by the Coen brothers — is worth watching if, like us, you like to see how other people dealt with it.



30

MARVEL'S AGENT CARTER

If, like us, you somehow missed the memo about this retro spin-off of the *Avengers* spin-off *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, be not dismayed. Just order up the Blu-ray and try your best to remember who's who, where and what.

Jean Paul
GAULTIER
"LE MALE"



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THE ALL-NEW JEEP RENEGADE.



Life's a journey. So why follow anyone else's path?

The All-New Jeep Renegade with its unmistakable styling and road presence is an SUV unlike any other. In addition to its wide choice of fuel-efficient engines, you also get the kind of safety features that come from over 70 years of adventures. What's more, our most compact SUV still hosts cutting-edge technologies including the Uconnect® 5" Touchscreen Infotainment System with DAB Radio, Satellite Navigation and Bluetooth®. So wherever you're going, go your own way.

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jeep.co.uk

Jeep

Model shown Jeep Renegade 1.6 E-torQ 110hp Longitude 5 Speed Manual at £19,695 including Special Pastel Paint at £500. OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR JEEP RENEGADE RANGE MPG (L/100KM): EXTRA URBAN 47.9 [5.9] – 70.6 [4.0], URBAN 32.5 [8.7] – 55.4 [5.1], COMBINED 40.9 [6.9] – 64.2 [4.4], CO₂ EMISSIONS: 160 – 115 G/KM. Fuel consumption and CO₂ figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption. *Customer deposit is £3,971. Optional Final Payment is £9,847. Contract Term is 24 months. Promotion available on Jeep Renegade 1.6 E-torQ 110hp Longitude 5 Speed Manual at £19,695 including Special Pastel Paint registered by 31st December 2015. Jeep Deposit Contribution only available in conjunction with Jeep Horizon FCP. With Jeep Horizon you have the option to return the vehicle and not pay the final payment, subject to the vehicle not having exceeded an agreed annual mileage (a charge of 6p per mile for exceeding 10,000 miles per annum in this example) and being in good condition. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and Conditions apply. At participating dealers only. Jeep Financial Services, PO Box 4465, Slough, SL1 0RW. Jeep® is a registered trademark of FCA US LLC.

WIN



IN
CINEMAS
21 OCT
cert TBC



WIN A FOCAL SOUND BASE WORTH £1200 WITH **PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: THE GHOST DIMENSION 3D**

You're scared, aren't you? Too scared even to read the rest of this paragraph! Oooh!!! If you've watched the other five *Paranormal Activity* films, we can't blame you. But don't worry: we may be talking about *The Ghost Dimension 3D* (in cinemas 21 October, paranormalmovie.co.uk), the horrifying conclusion to the hit supernatural series, but we promise not to say anything too scary about it.

Luckily for you, we're not just talking about the film – we're also giving away a pretty stupendous prize that will blast all those fearful thoughts clean out of your head. Retailing at £1200, the Focal Dimension System is a lounge-filling sound base dedicated to surround sound, with five speakers – including a pair of elliptical woofers – and plenty of connectivity options. If you win this month's competition, it's yours; if you don't, head over to richersounds.com to bag your own.

But first... ooh, what was that noise? There, behind you! Aaaaaarrrrgh!!!

HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to surround yourself with scarily good sound, just go to stuff.tv/win and answer this question:

WHICH OF THESE ACTIVITIES IS 'PARANORMAL'?

- A** ... Making a quiche
- B** ... Using your demonic powers to bring ungodly terror to the realm of the living
- C** ... Going for a nice walk

HURRY!
COMPETITION
CLOSES
9 DECEMBER
2015

Terms & conditions **1** Open to UK residents aged 18 or over. **2** Entries close 11:59pm, 9 December 2015. **3** Prizes are as stated. **4** Prizes are non-transferable. **5** Only one entry per person. For full Haymarket terms & conditions see www.stuff.tv/legal
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Mu-so® is our first wireless music system. Designed by our specialist audio engineers in England, its powerful digital brain delivers the most exceptional quality in sound, commanding 450 watts of power through six speakers to create an immersive sonic experience that has to be heard to be believed.



Speaker grilles available in Deep Blue, Vibrant Red and Burnt Orange colour options.

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mu-so

Go Deeper



WIN

OUR ENTIRE CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE!

Do you want to win *everything* in our Gift Guide? The whole shebang? The entire freaking turkey*? Just go to:

STUFF.TV/WIN

...and take part in our Christmas Quiz. And yes, the prize includes an iPad Air and a Moto 360 and a Sphero BB-8. The lot. Greatest geekmas ever.

*(No turkey included. We could maybe get you a sandwich, but it's really all about the gadgets.)



[Photography Matt Beedle]

WE HAVE

« STRAP IN AND PREPARE TO ENTER THE CHRISTMASPHERE »

GIFT- OFF

THE MAGIC WAND OF LIGHT PAINTING



Pixelstick

Do you know a snapper who loves the streaky lights of a long-exposure shot? If so, don't be deceived by the Pixelstick's name – this is no selfie-enabling tat. It's a light-painting tool capable of conjuring up the most incredible images. Just stick in an SD card loaded with the image of your choice and the Pixelstick's 200 RGB LEDs will display it. Then wave it around, take a long exposure and prepare to be wowed.

£330 / thepixelstick.com



SanDisk Ultra 200GB microSD

It's not the sexiest of gifts, but furnish your snap-happy loved one with 200GB of storage and they'll be yours forever. It can be slotted into your Android phone or tablet, plus it comes with an adaptor for a proper camera. It's class 10 certified, so ideal for shooting full HD video.

£140 / sandisk.co.uk



Polaroid Snap Instant Camera

Photography in 2015: 1) Take pics on your 20MP phone; 2) share them via Twittbookgram; 3) never look at them again. Polaroid wants to change all that. Take a picture with its 10MP cam and its built-in Zero Ink printer will instantly produce a real, physical 2x3in print.

US\$100 / polaroid.com



Xsories Bendy

A tripod is an essential tool for any photographer, and the flexible mini tripod that is the Xsories Bendy is available in three sizes (mini for phones, standard for compact cams, big for DSLRs) Its twisty turny legs can be wrapped around anything to give you a stable shooting base.

from £15 / xsories.com

PHOTO NERD

USE IT WITH...

SPACEPAK CLOTHES COMPRESSION UNIT

Get a bonus luggage upgrade with these air-vent-equipped packing aids, which compress to leave more room for gadgets.

£40 / bearandbear.com



COUNTRY HOPPER

ONE

Tooletries Bathroom Travel Case

If it wasn't likely to cost us thousands in luggage fees, we'd like our suitcase to be shaped like a giant toolkit. But as that's impractical we'll settle for this hardshell washbag, which protects its contents from being crushed and has a waterproof lining to prevent any aftershave disasters.

£20 / thefowndry.com

TWO

Xoo Charging Belt

Travel tech doesn't come much more stealthy than a belt with a built-in phone charger. Sure, you might have to explain it to airport security (it complies with all airline regulations), but imagine the smug feeling when your tablet starts running out of juice midway through *Birdman*.

\$250 / xoo.co

THREE

Brunton Revolt 9000

Shockproof, weatherproof and big enough to hold six full smartphone charges, this super-tough battery will keep your tech juiced no matter how far you've strayed from civilisation. It comes with a 3-in-1 adaptor to make sure it's compatible with both Androids and iPhones.

£80 / brunton.com

FOUR

Wondercube

Ask yourself what you think it's possible to fit into the space of a single cubic inch. A phone stand? A battery booster? A memory card reader? How about a torch? Well, the Wondercube packs all of these things and more into the same space as a your dinkiest keyring.

US\$55 / thewondercube.com

FIVE

LuminAID Inflatable Camping Light

Camping lanterns aren't just bulky space-hoggers; they love devouring batteries too. Not this sun-powered inflatable light, which packs down into pocketable form and gives an impressive 16 hours of illumination from just six hours in the sun. It will also float when the floods come.

£25 / bearandbear.com



1

2

3

4

5

BENDY BATTERIES The Xoo uses a new type of flexible battery and has enough capacity to fully charge an iPhone or Android phone.



TALKTOME Thanks to a surprisingly capable inline mic, the Flexes are great for answering calls while sweating it out on the treadmill.

CANS FAN

ONE

Sennheiser Momentum Wireless

The gift for the person you truly love, these cans combine the subtly sexy looks of the Momentum range with tech-tastic, audiophile-pleasing aptX Bluetooth. That means you look good, your music sounds better and you're not tethered to your phone. They last for 22 hours of sweet ear-lovin'.

£380 / sennheiser.com

TWO

B&O BeoPlay H2

Headphones are now inescapably objects of fashion. They say things about their wearers, such as 'I admire the style of the superstar DJ' or 'I'm refined and tasteful in a Danish way'. If the latter applies to you, you'll love the look of these. More importantly, these on-ears sound superb.

£170 / beoplay.com

THREE

Soul Electronics Flex

Upgrading a jogger to some proper sports earphones doesn't have to cost a fortune. This pair has hooks to keep the buds in securely, and controls for volume and skipping tracks, because you don't want an unexpected bit of Leonard Cohen sapping their last-mile motivation.

£50 / soulelectronics.com

FOUR

SoundMagic E50S

You could buy your loved one a pair of earphones for a tenner, but if you *really* love them, you should stretch the budget to this fine pair. They'll work with almost any flavour of phone, they'll fit even the most misshapen of ears and they sound absolutely terrific for the money.

£50 / hifiheadphones.co.uk

FIVE

Skullcandy Grind

If you know someone who bangs on about kickflips, can-cans or toe rolls, these are the headphones for them: tough enough to handle a tour of the skate park, available in enough colours to match the most lurid of decks, and with controls on the cups for changing tracks mid-ride.

£40 / skullcandy.co.uk

KRAFTWERK IN THEIR POCKET



Teenage Engineering Pocket Synths

There's a lead synth, a bass synth and a drum machine. The bass one is the best, because it's got a picture of a submarine on it, but they all offer the same unique combination of dinky lo-fi looks – like the flimsiest calculator you ever tried to smuggle into a maths exam – and wild, glitchy, highly tweakable sounds. Your recipient will need two AAA batteries and, ideally, a beard.

£50 / teenageengineering.com



DigiTech Trio

Scared off the rest of the band with those 18-minute wah-wah solos? Ah, who needs backing musicians anyway? Not you, if Santa turns up with one of these fellas. The Trio generates bass and drum parts in response to your playing; pick a genre, pick a style, set the tempo... and jam. The only thing it can't do is a drummer tantrum.

£150 / guitarguitar.co.uk



Blackstar Fly 3

Small enough to hide under a sandwich, the Fly 3 is all anyone really needs in the way of a bedroom practice amp. It'll certainly do for a nipper who's had his or her head turned by seeing One Direction pretending to strum some chords on YouTube. It has nice clean and distorted tones, and an aux input for MP3 audio.

£50 / blackstaramps.com



TC Electronic Hall Of Fame Mini

This titchy stompbox has just one control, yet it offers more sounds than any other reverb pedal you've ever heard. The TonePrint app lets you load any one of TC's many superb 'verbs into it simply by holding your phone against your guitar's pickup and pressing 'Beam'. Cavernously good.

£55 / tcelectronic.com

MUSIC MAKER



USE IT WITH...

TIDAL HI-FI

If their golden ears demand lossless FLAC quality, this upfront Tidal deal will last them 'til next summer.

£105 (seven months) / tidal.com

THE 21ST
CENTURY
UNDERWOOD



Qwerkywriter

Channel your inner F Scott Fitzgerald as you click-clack flowing prose in frivolous style with the Qwerkywriter. Ideal for would-be smartphone novelists in need of some vintage satisfaction, this set o' keys connects wirelessly to your iThings via Bluetooth, and features a built-in tablet stand, programmable return bar and retro key caps for the perfect mobile melding of modern and mechanical.

US\$330 / qwerkywriter.com



Ondu Pinhole Camera

It doesn't get much more retro than a photography technique that dates back to the ninth century, and these beautiful wooden pinhole cameras offer the kind of violet-tinged, grainy charm that you can't get with an Instagram filter. Choose from ten different models.

from US\$70 / ondupinhole.com



Trim Phone

Based on the first phone to use an electronic warbler, this re-imagining of the TRING ringer plugs straight into a standard phone socket. Available in suitable '70s colours, this replica replaces the original dialler with buttons, while retaining the otherworldly oldness that retro-revellers will revere.

£40 / designmuseumshop.com



Pipework Candlestick

Plumbing may involve some pretty revolting materials, but there's beauty in there. Intricate pipework, copper seals, brass valves: the stuff of design dreams. And now you can have that under-basin chic right on your dining room table, as these drippy dazzlers make for a pipingly perfect centrepiece.

from £28 / nickfraser.co.uk

RETRO LOVER

USE IT WITH...

BLUEBIRD TEA CLUB SUBSCRIPTION

Fill their fancy porcelain with a monthly delivery of three loose leaf tea blends. They can even play 'tea roulette' with them.

£60 (six months) / bluebirdteaco.com



DESIGN DEVOTEE

ONE

Lexon Liquid Station Desktop Organiser

A uniquely stylish solution to workstation clutter, the droopy dips of this super stationery store make space for everything from paperclips to Post-its. Best of all, it doubles up as a deliciously juicy jelly mould.

Okay, we made that bit up.

£30 / selfridges.com

TWO

Nanoleaf Bloom

A lightbulb for Christmas? It might sound like a high-risk gift strategy, but the Bloom is a surprisingly strong stocking contender. It's so efficient it promises to last over 27 years (past Christmas 2042, in fact). It's also dimmable, even if you don't have a dimmer switch.

US\$40 / shop.nanoleaf.me

THREE

CMYK Colour Swatch Calendar

With 371 carefully chosen shades, this colour-of-the-day calendar will deliver an inspiring, coordinated strip of hues to your designer friend every week. Each strip is complete with its corresponding CMYK colour value too, should your recipient be planning to go big on the Dulux.

€40 / typografie.de

FOUR

Toast Rubberband Cup & Saucer

The aptly-named Rubberband is a simple, stylish solution to mug rack blandness. A perfect contrast of white porcelain and colourful silicon, it'll bring some life to the tired teaware gathering dust in their cupboard – particularly if paired with the range's matching teapot.

€30 / designers-avenue.com

FIVE

Beyond Object Align

Like the classic 'Zig-Zag' illusion, where a magician divides his surprisingly chirpy assistant into three pieces, the Align's 'dislocated' form entices you to twist its stem back into flush-fitting form. It might be overkill for shopping lists, but pen-loving pals will love it.

£40 / beyond-object.com



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2016			emv
24	sunday	50 40 0 0	
23	saturday	53 0 35 0	
22	friday	0 55 10 0	
21	thursday	50 10 0 0	
20	wednesday	53 50 0 0	
19	tuesday	50 0 15 0	
18	monday	0 50 30 0	

BRIGHT IDEA Turn your standard light switch on to make the Bloom slowly brighter – then press it again to lock in your chosen brightness.



PRINTS CHARMING To turn your app-snap into a Polaroid, download the Impossible Project app (iOS, Android) and put your phone on top.

APPLE FAN



USE IT WITH... **PAPER (Free, iOS)**
This sketching app has added diagram tools and annotations to its brushes and pens.

ONE

Knomad Air Shoreditch

Rooting around in a rucksack while someone reclines a chair into your face is never an aeroplane highlight, so save a friend such travel anguish with this water-resistant iPad Air case. It holds any 10in tablet, plus pens, passport, phone and Knomo's own slim battery pack. **£50 / knomobags.com**

TWO

Instant Lab Universal

It's not a true Throwback Thursday until everyone gets their smartphone snaps printed out on Polaroid instant film. This dinky darkroom will do just that, spitting out a real souvenir when you put your phone face-down in its cradle. **£160 / shop.the-impossible-project.com**

THREE

B&O BeoLab A2 Natural

You can get a great Bluetooth speaker for less money (see the £120 Cambridge Audio Go, p152), but none quite match your Apple fan's taste for build quality and milled aluminium like the A2. Its sound is clean and open, while an impressive 24-hour battery life makes it a fine holiday companion. **£300 / beoplay.com**

FOUR

Lensbaby Creative Mobile Kit

Photography apps like VSCO Cam are so good they almost make snapping too easy, but there are some places their filters can't go. This pack of two lenses plus a kickstand and mount can help create anything from motion-blurred sports shots to kaleidoscopic landscapes. **£75 / wexphoto-graphic.com**

FIVE

FiftyThree Pencil

Apple might have given the iPad Pro a posh stylus, but that doesn't mean other iPad owners can't enjoy some digital sketching and smudging. Best paired with an iPad Air, the Pencil is now pressure-sensitive and works with 18 apps, including Adobe's range and FiftyThree's own Paper. **£50 / fiftythree.com**

oppo

Beautiful sounds
available here



PM-2



PM-3

Award-winning planar
magnetic headphones &
headphone amplifiers.

Listen for yourself at an
OPPO retailer near you:

oppodigital.co.uk/where-to-buy



HA-2



PM-3

oppodigital.co.uk/where-to-buy

1

ON A ROLL Laser-engraved measurements on the side ensure pastry precision, in case Monica Galetti's standing over you.

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MASTER CHEF

ONE

Aircraft Aluminium Rolling Pin

This roller rod is machined from aircraft-grade aluminium. Why? Well, not only does it give your cutlery drawer a slice of celebrity chef style, but its heat-conducting skills make for cool culinary creativity, whether you're in a steaming hot kitchen or next to an open window in January.

£40 / thefowndry.com

TWO

Drop Scale

An iPad-compatible wireless weighing whizz, this smart scale adjusts recipes in response to the amount of ingredients you have. Best of all, the capacitive touch button on the silicon scale itself means no need to tap your sticky digits all over your tablet. Delicious.

£80 / getdrop.com

THREE

Medamade Oil Dispenser

When the mother-in-law swings by for a delicious pasta dinner you need to up your oil game. Grab this conical container, constructed from borosilicate glass and complete with gravitational pouring mechanism, and she'll be bowled over by your olive knowledge.

£30 / designmuseumshop.com

FOUR

Oxo Good Grips Spiralizer

If you're looking to help someone kick their pasta addiction, stick a spiralizer in their stocking. It slices vegetables into spirals, turning a courgette into noodles that taste just like pasta (they do once they're covered in pesto, anyway). Super-healthy – although it could also be great for curly fries...

£15 / johnlewis.com

FIVE

Cosmic Dinner Plate (Mars)

If you can't quite afford to get your favourite stargazer a new telescope, bring the planets to their dinner table instead with this range of planetary plates. All 11 are safe for microwaves and dishwashers, and if you buy a few you'll get to spark arguments over who gets to eat their pizza off Pluto.

£30 each / amara.com



IS IT A BIRD? YES,
BUT ALSO A
CORKSCREW



Alessi Parrot

If you want someone to have a warm fuzzy feeling whenever they think about you, giving them a distinctive corkscrew is surely an effective choice. Every time they take this nice hand-painted parrot from the kitchen drawer they'll be reminded of your good taste and generosity, and then they'll have a glass of wine.

£36 / store.alessi.com



Molecular Mixology kit

Adding a nip of Ribena to your can of Strongbow once constituted a cocktail, but now society demands that each sip of their Manhattan contains a sphere of flavours that burst lightly upon their tongue. This kit can create such marvels. Two snakebite foams, please, barman.

from £24 / firebox.com



American White Oak Toasted Barrel

Thanks to its greater surface-area-to-booze ratio, a small barrel will 'age' spirits – give them deeper, softer flavour – much quicker than a big one. So your whisky aficionado can put some young spirit into this little tub for two weeks, and it'll come out tasting like it's been aged for two years.

£42 / masterofmalt.com



Shaken Cocktails subscription

You could spend hundreds of pounds building someone a lovingly stocked cocktail cabinet, or you could get Shaken Cocktails to do it. Monthly delivery boxes contain the right ingredients to make four large cocktails, with some good spirits left over for tasting.

£24 (per box) / shakencocktails.com

BOOZE HOUND



USE IT WITH...

DROP KITCHEN

This companion app for the Drop Scale serves up hundreds of free recipes and will handily suggest substitutes for any ingredients you've run out of. **£free** (iOS)



8-Bit Pixel Clock

"Wow, Dad, is this a *Minecraft* clock?" Because while big chunky pixels fill one generation with nostalgia for *Mega Man* and *Metroid*, they're just as popular with the following generation, which uses them in *Minecraft* as a digital version of Lego (which is itself still really popular with everyone). So: "Er... yeah, why not? That's why I bought it, because you like *Minecraft*. Heh heh."

£15 / gamerabilia.co.uk



Lexon Flip Clock

At some point in our evolutionary past, scientists say, we were menaced by nocturnal tortoises. As a result, most of us feel an instinctive urge to flip something over when we wake up. The Flip Clock is ideal: you silence the alarm by flipping it, but the display rights itself so you don't think it's 00:01 when it's actually 10:00.

£25 / johnlewis.com



Monkey Clock

Vinyl records aren't easily recyclable but they are eminently upcyclable, and design company Upstairs Studio takes unwanted records and turns them into wall clocks. We're huge fans of this monkey-in-a-hat design because, while it's stylish and eco-conscious, it's also a monkey in a hat.

£28 / bouf.com



Nixie FunKlock Kit

No nerd's lair is complete without retro-futuristic glowing tubes ticking out the hours. This comes as a kit, so there's soldering involved, but for many geeks that will only add to the appeal. The backlight colours are programmable, as is a night mode if you plan on having it in a bedroom.

£47 / pvelectronics.co.uk

CLOCK STAR

ALTERNATIVELY... BAD DOG DESIGNS

If you don't fancy reacquainting yourself with a soldering iron, this store sells a fine range of pre-built Nixie clocks.

bad-dog-designs.co.uk



TIME LORD

ONE

Sturmanskie Yuri Gagarin

It's said that NASA spent millions creating a pen that would work in space, while the Russians just used pencils. And it's a myth. But don't let that stop you telling the story when explaining the Soviet simplicity of this watch, of the same make and design that Yuri Gagarin wore.

£75 / sciencemuseumshop.co.uk

TWO

Leff Tube Watch D42

If you're buying for someone with a taste for industrial design, then this solidly beautiful chunk of time is worth the investment. The case and minute/hour markers are made from an extruded aluminium ring, so it looks simple and spare, but still allows for accurate time-reading.

£150 / designwharf.com

THREE

Swatch Sistem51

A fiendishly brilliant movement of 51 parts held together by a single screw makes this a proper, self-winding, Swiss-made mechanical watch. But unlike other proper, self-winding Swiss watches, this one's a colourful and fun piece of modern design, and it doesn't cost a fortune.

£108 / swatch.com

FOUR

G-Shock G'MIX GBA-400

This semi-smartwatch pairs up with your phone to offer volume and track control, audio effects and notifications, and it will even use SoundHound to recognise tunes that are playing outside your cans. It can also use your phone to auto-sync to network time wherever you are.

£180 / casioonline.co.uk

FIVE

Shore Camber

Shore's gift boxes combine any of their watches with any three of their nicely made straps. Pick a metal, silicone and leather combo to go with one of their faces and you're effectively giving someone three different watches for a bargain price.

£115 (£170 for gift box) / shoreprojects.com



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PRIDE OF FACE The Camber is one of 14 faces you can choose from when making a Shore Gift Box; there are also 24 types of strap.

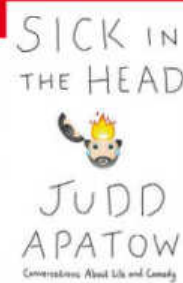
RAVENOUS READER



ONE
The Making Of 2001: A Space Odyssey
Piers Bizony
Kubrick's 1968 galaxy-spanning movie remains a cornerstone of sci-fi, and now you can go behind the scenes of the space epic that created space epics. With a compendium of interstellar images from the production, as well as concept paintings and publicity prints, this is perfect for visual visionaries. No HAL included, sadly.



TWO
Beautiful You
Chuck Palahniuk
Think of *Fight Club*. Then think of the diametric opposite of it. Does it involve the world's most potent sex toys, so effective that women flock in their millions to buy them from a rogue named C Li Maxwell? So magnificent that they stop leaving their rooms? No? Well, the author of the former just wrote a book about the latter.



THREE
Sick In The Head
Judd Apatow
Comedy's a personal preference – one man's slapstick is in another's stand-up sin bin, which makes finding funny fancies for friends fiendishly fraught. But fear not, for this leafer is packed with stories from everyone in the (US) banter biz. From wild anecdotes to starstruck stories, this is a thoroughly good laugh-a-long that talks to the likes of Silverman, Rogen, Schumer and Jonze.



FOUR
Thing Explainer
Randall Munroe
As much as we love, well, stuff, it can be confusing. Nuclear thermodynamics? Cellular biology? Microwaves? Hard to put into words. Thankfully, *Thing Explainer* does just that, using only the 1000 most common words to describe the devices, science, and inventions that baffle us non-boffins. Put some popcorn in the food-heating radiobox and enjoy.



FIVE
Vinyl: The Art Of Making Records
Mike Evans
Following the LP's rebirth as prime collectible material, *Vinyl* harks back to the days when cover art sold albums and every reissued record had fresh visuals. From design and packaging to special grooves and picture discs, this book un-jackets the inputs of labels, designers and artists on symbolic singles and long-renowned LPs.



Reel History
Alex von Tunzelmann
If you'd rather revel in the action without going Full Nerd, try this quest through movie history to discern fact from fib. Did Cleopatra really bathe in milk? Did Lincoln really patent swipe to unlock?



The Water Knife
Paolo Bacigalupi
This novel charts a journey on the edge of civilisation's collapse, where deaths rack up in pursuit of Earth's most valuable commodity. No, not a *Stuff* magazine subscription: it's a search for water.



You're All Just Jealous Of My Jetpack
Tom Gauld
For those who prefer their funnies with some sharp observations, try this from the *Guardian* cartoonist, who blends the absurd with the intellectual.



The Four-Dimensional Human
Laurence Scott
Once you've cracked the lingo, delve into what it means to be a human in the digital age. From new knowledge portals to always-on access, this era has changed not just society but us, the people in it.



Good Night And Good Riddance
David Cavanagh
This book charts the life of Britain's biggest underdog broadcaster, John Peel. Throwing the spotlight on 300 of his shows over a 35-year period, it's a fan-focused foray into his world.

ALTERNATIVELY...

NOT JUST A NEW TV.
**A WHOLE NEW CATEGORY
OF TELEVISION.**



PERFECT BLACK CREATES PERFECT COLOUR

Unlike other TV's, only OLED uses self-lighting pixel technology,
delivering a never before seen standard of black, colour and viewing angle.
With truly breathtaking design, LG's OLED TV is the most advanced television you can buy.

lg.com/uk/discoveroled

LG OLED TV



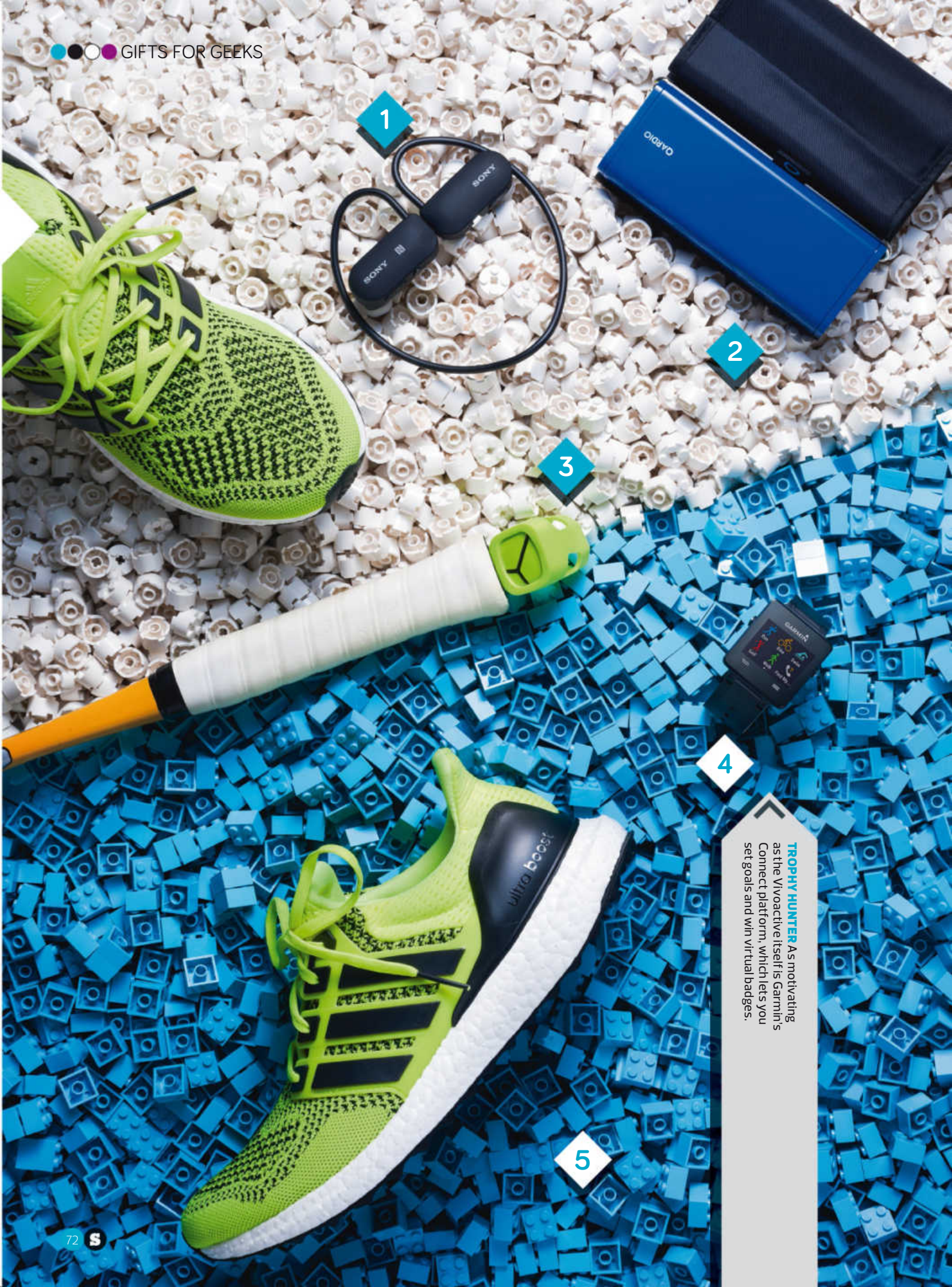
LG 55EG960V
JUNE 2015



LG 55EG960V
MAY 2015



LG 55EG960V
JUNE 2015



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TROPHY HUNTER As motivating as the Vivoactive itself is Garmin's Connect platform, which lets you set goals and win virtual badges.

FITNESS FREAK

ONE

Sony Smart B-Trainer

If you can't decide between a GPS watch, a fitness band or heart-rate tracking headphones for your beloved runner, this combines all three. They also get pace-matched music, 16GB of onboard tunes and a 10-hour battery life, which means they won't have to take their phone running.

£230 / sony.co.uk

TWO

Qardioarm

For the scientifically-minded sportsman in your pub clan, this clinically validated smart monitor gives you blood pressure smarts in your sitting room. It tracks systolic and diastolic BP and detects irregular heartbeats, monitoring their changes through the day.

£100 / getqardio.com

THREE

Zepp Tennis Kit

Like a miniature Ivan Lendl (pity it can't replicate his withering glare), this accessory coaches players by capturing racquet speed, power and accuracy, before crunching the data into a 3D animation that can be viewed instantly in its iOS and Android phone app.

£130 / zepp.com

FOUR

Garmin Vivoactive

The Jessica Ennis of GPS watches, this all-rounder mixes tracking for various sports with notifications from your phone. It doesn't have heart-rate monitoring built in, but sleep analysis and compatibility with Garmin's highly motivating Connect platform make it a tempting piece of kit.

£200 / buy.garmin.com

FIVE

Adidas Ultra Boost

These trainers' styrofoam-like cushioning is regarded by runners of all levels as one of the most comfortable rides around, while their Primeknit upper expands with your foot on long runs. Few trainers are better for anything from middle-distance to marathon training.

£130 / adidas.co.uk

A STRAVA
LOVER'S BEST
FRIEND



Polar M450

Don't let your friend's addiction to the Strava app put you off buying them a standalone GPS computer. Neat handlebar units like this will save their phone battery on long rides, and feed their stats obsession thanks to compatibility with power, speed and heart-rate sensors (sold separately). It's good value and also offers a 'Back to Start' feature for directions home and syncing with, you guessed it, Strava.

£125 / polar.com



Bike wheel coasters

Because if there's one thing better than cycling, it's having a cup of tea and a biscuit and talking about cycling. Remind your favourite cyclist of their (t)rusty steed with this set of four wheely nice coasters.

Why not combine them with home-made saddle stools and a pannier rack patio table for the full package?

£16 / designmuseumshop.com



Cinelli Winged Tape

Designed by Ana Benaroya, this tape will spruce up your mate's handlebars a treat. Combining Cinelli's tape tech and grippy comfort, the Cyclops design is also eye-deal (sorry) for fans of bikes, biology and all things grippy. If nothing else, the red ribbon wrap will set them apart from the rest of the peloton.

from £30 / wingedstore.com



PDW Shiny Object Inflator

If your cyclist friend regularly finds him or herself huffing and puffing at the roadside with a puncture, sort that out with this CO₂ re-inflation kit. Compatible with both Presta and Schrader valves, it's a nice-looking emergency backup for those times a rider gets stuck in a race or a downpour.

£12 / wiggle.co.uk

BIKE GEEK

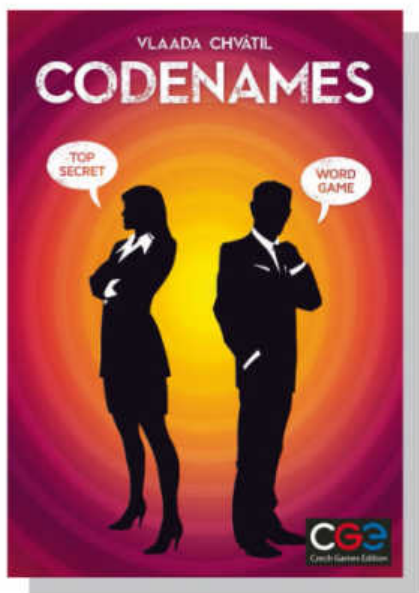


TAKE THEM HERE...

SUPERNOVA 5KM, LONDON, 5 MARCH 2016

The Ultra Boost's 'solar yellow' colourway is ideal for this night race, where fluorescent clothing is encouraged.

£16 entry / supernovarun.com



Codenames

The smartest game of 2015 is simple but ludicrously tense: 25 random words are laid out on the table, and two team leaders have to help their teams guess their assigned words using short clues. So, "furious, five" would hint that five words on the grid have something to do with anger, or maybe the *Fast And The Furious* movies. Be careful, though: guessing the board's 'assassin' word instantly ends the game.

£12.50 / gameslore.com



Tales Of The Arabian Nights

First published in 1985, this classic choose-your-own-adventure game is now available in a beautiful, even more ambitious edition. Will you find a magical sword and become the Sultan of a glittering city? Find your true love in the belly of a giant sea creature? Or just get arrested for mugging a wizard?

£40 / amazon.co.uk



Skull

First played by the Hell's Angels, this is like poker without all the maths. Players secretly place either skull or rose cards face-down to create something like a field of landmines, and then take bets on how many cards they can flip and reveal only roses. This edition is styled after Mexico's Day of the Dead.

£14 / bagofholding.co.uk



Cosmic Encounter

This interstellar empire-building game is different every time. Each player picks an alien race, and each type breaks the game in some way. The Virus must be stopped; the Loser wins if he loses, just like Nick Berry; the Gambler can bluff on their encounter card; and the Citadel can build planet fortifications.

£40 / thirstymeeples.co.uk

BOARD GAMER

USE IT WITH...

3D-PRINTED BIRD FEEDER

Complement your chaffinch cam with this feeder – you can print it yourself using this Thingiverse link: bit.ly/3Dbirdfeeder from €50 / printednest.com



TECH KID

ONE

Naturebytes Wildlife Cam Kit

If you've seen *Chicken Run* and don't quite trust your garden visitors, this kit might just be what you need. Built using a Raspberry Pi and a camera housed inside a funky angular shell, the Naturebytes kit is a waterproof, heat-sensitive snapper to capture stealthy fauna shots in all weathers.

£150 / naturebytes.org

TWO

Osmo

The Osmo platform will keep kids enthralled for hours, and learning as they go. Slot your iPad into the stand and slip the Reflector over its camera and you've got an interactive puzzle peripheral. As they play, the app intelligently recognises their shapes, letters, numbers and drawings.

from £70 / playosmo.com

THREE

Anki Overdrive

Scalextric for your smartphone, Anki is a modular track of straights and right angles, around which robotic supercars tear in battle or race mode. Compatible with iOS and Android, it lets up to four players control the speed and lane choice, while their cars handle the corners.

from £150 / anki.com

FOUR

Sphero BB-8

This gyroscopic mini-droid is straight out of your sci-fi dreams. No, not the one with Princess Leia. Like a master of the Force, you can control the BB-8 remotely via an app, or it can be left to explore the living room in all its gliding glory, as you record virtual holographics to Obi-Wan (or Mum).

£130 / store.sphero.com

FIVE

Minecraft Gameband

What better way for online offspring to keep crafting wherever they go than to strap their entire brick-built worlds to their wrists? Plug it in, play, and after a day of digital designing, their *Minecraft* Worlds will be saved on the Band and securely backed up on cloud-servers. Blocky brilliance.

£65 / gameband.com

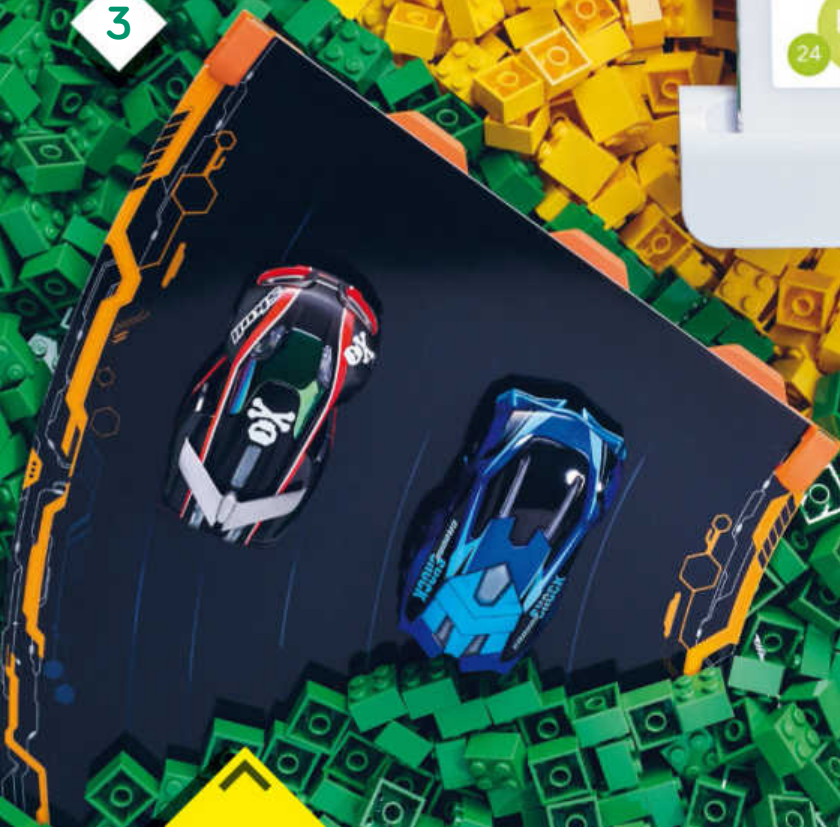
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WIPEOUT-STYLE WEAPONS
Each Anki car has a unique arsenal of guns like plasma cannons, which players can unleash from the app.

ANDROID ADDICT

ONE

WoodPuck Qi Charger

Few things that go by the description of 'puck' are as pleasing and useful as this. Crafted from finest Mao Zhu bamboo (which is good, because it's very sustainable), this little disc will wirelessly charge any Qi-enabled device in a beautiful fusion of nature and tech.

£40 / fonesalesman.com

TWO

Chromecast / Chromecast Audio

Google's revamped video-streaming dongle still lets you use your phone as a remote for playing web content on your telly, but now it has an improved app, loads of new games and an audio-streaming brother that lets you do the same for playing music on your hi-fi.

£30 each / store.google.com

THREE

Instacube

For genuinely Instagram-hooked Android fans, it's a drag having to take their phone out of their pocket to flick through celebs' snaps of what they had for lunch. Thankfully, this wireless photo-frame-style touchscreen lets you stream Instapics onto a 'living canvas' on your wall, desk or shelf.

£150 / firebox.com

FOUR

Homido VR Headset

This stereoscopic 3D, 360° head-tracking helmet turns mobiles into movie magicians. Fully adjustable for eyesight strength and face shape (should Grandpa want a go), the completely wireless headset can also be used to enter a world of immersive 3D gaming. It's compatible with iOS as well as Android.

€70 / homido.com

FIVE

Moto 360 (2nd gen)

Smartwatches have come a long way from looking like wrist-based PDAs, and the second-gen 360 might just be the prettiest yet. From the circular display and sharper screen to the stainless-steel bezel, it's the Android Wear watch that best stands up to Apple's style-conscious wristputer.

from £230 / store.google.com



USE IT WITH... **PLEX (€free)**
If you have a NAS drive, use the Plex app on your phone to play its music on your hi-fi.

WOULD SIR PREFER STONE? If the WoodPuck's bamboo look isn't to their tastes, the QiStone+ (£55) is a fine wireless charging alternative.



BRAUN
Series 7

No.1

From the world's No. 1 foil shaver brand*

Does in the
first stroke
what others
do in two"



S.VETTEL

Sebastian Vettel
F1 World Champion
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

* Based on global Braun value share in electric foil shaver market from May 2013 to April 2014.
Source: Leading market research institute ** Compared to previous Braun generations



50% off Braun Series 7 Shavers

shop online at boots.com



let's feel good

Offer ends 05/01/2016. Available at larger Boots stores. Subject to Availability.
Please see www.boots.com/ordertodaycollecttomorrow for full terms and conditions about the Order & Collect service. Mon - Sat, Geographical exclusions apply.

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COOLER THAN THE PLANETHOTH
Is that the moon floating in your glass? No, the Death Star. Sith Lord life doesn't get much better than this.

FILM BUFF

ONE

Batman Multitool

No, it won't emit a spray that repels sharks, or blast out oil slicks, but this tool is just as important as the rest of the Dark Knight's arsenal of tricks. Although it looks like a deadly throwing star, it is in fact a harmless bottle opener, to free your nectar of choice from its glass confines.

£6 / thefowndry.com

TWO

Hot Wheels 1:43-scale DeLorean

This is for the DeLorean-obsessed person in your life. The one who's always yammering on about buying their dream car before kitting it out with a flux capacitor and authentic year readout display. But they'll never achieve their dream, because life is a cruel, harsh mistress.

£40 / iwantoneofthose.com

THREE

Cocktails Of The Movies

Hollywood and booze have long been intertwined: from Marilyn Monroe's infamous Manhattan to 007's vodka martini, there are iconic drinks littered throughout hundreds of flicks. This illustrated cocktail tome serves up 64 classic recipes from the big screen, promising hours of light-headed fun.

£15 / firebox.com

FOUR

1:9 Iron Man Age Of Ultron Vignette

This is not a toy. Nor is it a figurine. It's a delightful hybrid of the two, which comes unassembled, letting the recipient put it together and pose it any which way they fancy. It's true to the films in every single way, minus Robert Downey Junior's sass and exquisitely sculpted facial hair.

£135 / forbiddenplanet.com

FIVE

3D Death Star Ice Cube Tray

You've just destroyed a planet. The Storm Troopers have been working hard, and your dark-robed boss has given you the night off. What better way to unwind than by enjoying a glass of single malt Beshpin whisky, cooled by an ice cube shaped like the very behemoth you're residing in?

£10 / forbiddenplanet.com

MINIFIGS FOR NARCISSISTS



Leblox

This fun little app lets you create your very own pixelated creations, which can be manipulated and placed into existing photos or used as avatars, before sharing them online for all the world to see. Best of all for secret Santas, you can also get your designs 3D-printed and delivered as personalised gifts, without ever having to leave the confines of your smartphone or tablet.

from £14.50 / leblox.com



Jumbo Cutlery Drainer

This cute yet functional fellow can be used to drain cutlery or hold toothbrushes, thanks to a hollow trunk that drains water away. Its low-poly design should melt the hearts of most – unless they've got a crippling phobia of elephants and/or toothbrushes, of course.

£17 / luckies.co.uk



Sneakers: The Trump Card Game

Do you know your Air Force 1s from your Superstars? Can you appreciate a heel-situated air bubble? Do shoelace eyelets send your heart aflutter? No? Well, you're trainer-loving mate does, so they'll treasure this 52-piece set of shoe-centric trump cards a lot more than you will.

£9 / designmuseumshop.com



Spice Rack

What do Sargol saffron, premium Madagascan vanilla powder, true Ceylon cinnamon powder and fragrant green cardamon powder all have in common? Well, they're four of the most expensive spices on the planet, and this matchbox presents them in adorable miniature bottles. Ideal to spice up any foodie's life.

£5 / inamatchbox.com

SECRET SANTA



PAIR IT WITH...

BACK TO THE FUTURE FLUX CAPACITOR BOX SET

Your Hill Valley obsessive might still have the trilogy on VHS, but their bookshelf won't be complete without this.

£60 / amazon.co.uk

WE'RE TAKING BACK CHRISTMAS

SORRY KIDS, IT'S OUR TURN TO PLAY



DJI PHANTOM 3 QUADCOPTER DRONE

With 23 minutes of flight time, 2km transmission range and ultra-HD 4K camera, the DJI Phantom 3 is an absolute cracker.



DA VINCI 1.0 AiO 3D PRINTER

With its own built-in scanner, you can 3D print a few extra stocking fillers. Jolly cool.



ACTION R10 ELECTRIC ROCKETSKATES

Forget driving, we're skating home for Christmas in these electronic powered skates that rocket along at up to 12mph.



CELESTRON NEXSTAR 130 SLT

Perfect for both terrestrial and celestial viewing or convincing your kids you've just seen Santa's sleigh.

Tired of ties? Sick of socks? Let Maplin guide you through the best Christmas deals on gadgets, toys and tech in town.

askmaplin

The electronics specialist
maplin



ONLINE
over 20,000 lines at maplin.co.uk



CLICK+COLLECT
order online and collect in store



PHONE
order on 0333 400 9500

BINGEWATCHER



ONE

The Wire

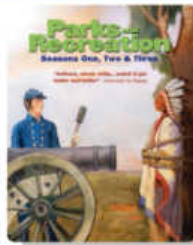
The Greatest TV Show Ever Made™ finally gets the box set it deserves, swapping standard-def 4:3 for full HD widescreen like it's 2008 or something. But those extra pixels are almost incidental when you're watching this near-flawless study of a city, even if it will take an episode of two to tune into the accents. And since you asked, series two's our favourite.



TWO

Agent Carter

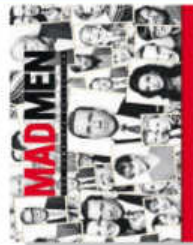
A curious and short spin-off from the beginnings of Marvel's Captain America timeline, this eight-episode series was not heavily marketed in the UK, meaning that a lot of people missed its TV airing. But the antics of Agent Peggy Carter, in a stylishly realised post-WWII America, are well worth catching up on – especially if Agent Santa is footing the bill.



THREE

Parks And Recreation

If your children won't stop crying because of all the nasty things Doctor Who said when they accidentally watched your *The Thick Of It* box set, sit the family down in front of *Parks And Recreation* series 1, 2 and 3. It takes the heartfelt niceness of *The Office* (US) and turns it up a notch, but somehow manages to remain charming and genuinely funny.



FOUR

Mad Men

A psychiatric ward for damaged men allows its inmates to pretend they work at an ad agency in the 1960s. Special nurses work as 'secretaries', towards whom the tragic invalids are alternately lusty and unforgivably offensive... Wait, you didn't know about this? What about the name? And why do you think every episode ends with Don staring into space like he's just been tranquillised?



FIVE

House Of Cards

Unless you've been living under a rock for the last couple of years you can't have failed to notice this blockbuster political remake, which secured Netflix's status not just as a streaming service, but as a maker of Big TV Shows. If you actually have been living under a rock for two years then you're probably a crab, in which case try Crabflix's *House Of Crabs*.



Fargo

This isn't a remake of the Coen brothers film but shares its snowy setting, murderous themes and blackly hilarious style. It's also equally good – Martin Freeman's weaselly salesman Lester Nygaard is a particular highlight.



Fear The Walking Dead

This spin-off from *The Walking Dead* (now in its sixth season) tells the story of what happened before Rick Grimes woke up in an abandoned hospital. Don't worry, there's still plenty of zombies.



The Thick Of It

We can't help wishing there was a real Malcolm Tucker to stride into politicians' offices, scream abuse at them and fire them on the spot every so often, but we'll make do with Peter Capaldi in this, the defining political comedy of a generation.



Boardwalk Empire

Inspired by the life of Enoch L. Johnson, a real criminal kingpin in prohibition-era Atlantic City, this five-season gangster drama is an American classic, a period masterpiece and quite possibly Steve Buscemi's finest hour.



Orange Is The New Black

Based on the real-life experiences of middle-class jailbird Piper Kerman, *OITNB* manages to be smart and funny while weaving a fairly complex web of life stories and sneaking in some social commentary.

ALTERNATIVELY...

TOP OF THE SHOPS

How to win Black Friday

Anyone on the hunt for Christmas discounts should set a calendar reminder for Friday 27 November, otherwise known as Black Friday. Last year retailers such as Amazon and John Lewis served up a generous platter of price drops on TVs, iPads, laptops and cameras across the weekend, which usually lasts until the following 'Cyber Monday'. This year the latter is predicted to be the UK's first £1bn online shopping day. Here's a three-step Black Friday survival guide:

Black Friday Death Count

7 98

ONE

Shop from home

The desire to land Black Friday deals in physical stores can result in the odd stampede: look at Black Friday Death Count (blackfridaydeathcount.com). Online shopping not only saves you from a potential trampling – it also means you can use the internet's bargain-finding services. Such as...



TWO

Consult the camel

Amazon is the king of Black Friday. But if you're dubious about just how much of a bargain one of its offers is, search uk.camelcamelcamel.com or install the site's browser extension. You'll see price histories for the product, showing whether it's a true deal or if it's had a pre-Black Friday price bump.



THREE

Let us do the work

Many stores announce deals on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Make sure you follow any with a history of Black Friday bargains in your targeted area (for example, ao.com for white goods, or John Lewis for iPads). And visit Stuff.tv in the run-up to the weekend – we'll have a list of the best deals.

DONE THAT?
NOW DO THESE...

Buy gifts from anywhere

If you've found the perfect gift in an overseas store that doesn't deliver to the UK, Parcel's crowd-powered international deliveries (parcel.com) could help.

Save them a depot trip

Need to send a small-ish present? Postboxed's gifts (postboxed.co.uk) are all packaged to guarantee they'll fit through UK letterboxes.

Become a sci-fi buyer

Be the Christmas shopper your '90s self dreamed of with PriceSpy's Apple Watch app (Efree, iOS), which brings live gift-tracking to your wrist.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: THEY'RE A PRESENT A MONTH



ONE Vinoa

Get a wine buff a monthly hit of four miniatures to sample with help from an in-app guide. They can then order a discounted full-size bottle of anything that hits the spot. £30/m / vinoa.co.uk



TWO Hot Sauce Club

Each Hot Sauce club box contains a bottle of hot sauce, two chutneys, jams or rubs, a snack, and a DIY kit such as a 'make your own chilli ginger beer' pack. £15/m / hotsauceclub.co.uk



THREE Jukely

Save a mate the hassle of buying gig tickets with Jukely's subscription pass. Choose the show, get on the guestlist and walk smugly past all the people queuing in the rain. from £25/m / jukely.com



FOUR Stuff subscription

Like recurring malaria and Prince Philip's sense of humour, Stuff is the gift that just won't stop giving. Also, they'll think it cost more than £20 for a year. £20 for 12 issues / themagazineshop.com

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App:roved

FOR
KILLING
TIME

● Sage Solitaire

This one takes the card game that devoured a billion hours of your time on ancient PCs and rethinks it for mobile. The result is a sort of poker/solitaire mash-up. Further strategy comes from bonus points under each pile, hands requiring cards from two rows, trashes that replenish after successful moves, and a multiplier hand. All of which makes this simple card game hugely compelling. The sole IAP removes ads and provides extra modes.

Stuff says ★★★★★
Efree / iOS

FOR
BACKING
UP DOCS

● Scanbot

Important documents have a tendency to get themselves lost, so a smartphone scanner is a wise investment. Scanbot's our current favourite. It does a great job scanning, edge-finding and auto-cropping. But buy the IAP and it gets really clever, helping you name files and anticipating where to save documents online. Even better: using character recognition, it picks out details — phone numbers, email addresses, URLs — and turns them into an actions menu for fast access.

Stuff says ★★★★★
Efree (£3.99 IAP) / Android, iOS

FOR
SUPER
DOODLING

● Paper

We suspect this update will annoy some people. Paper used to be a simple iPad version of expensive journals — all sleek and swish. Now it's an explosion of digital sticky notes, combining photos, sketches, checklists and drawn diagrams. If you've a minimalism fetish, have a strop in the corner; for the rest of us, this update — which now also brings Paper to iPhone — is fast and efficient, and full of great ideas: swipe to style, photo spotlights, and shape correction for scribbled charts.

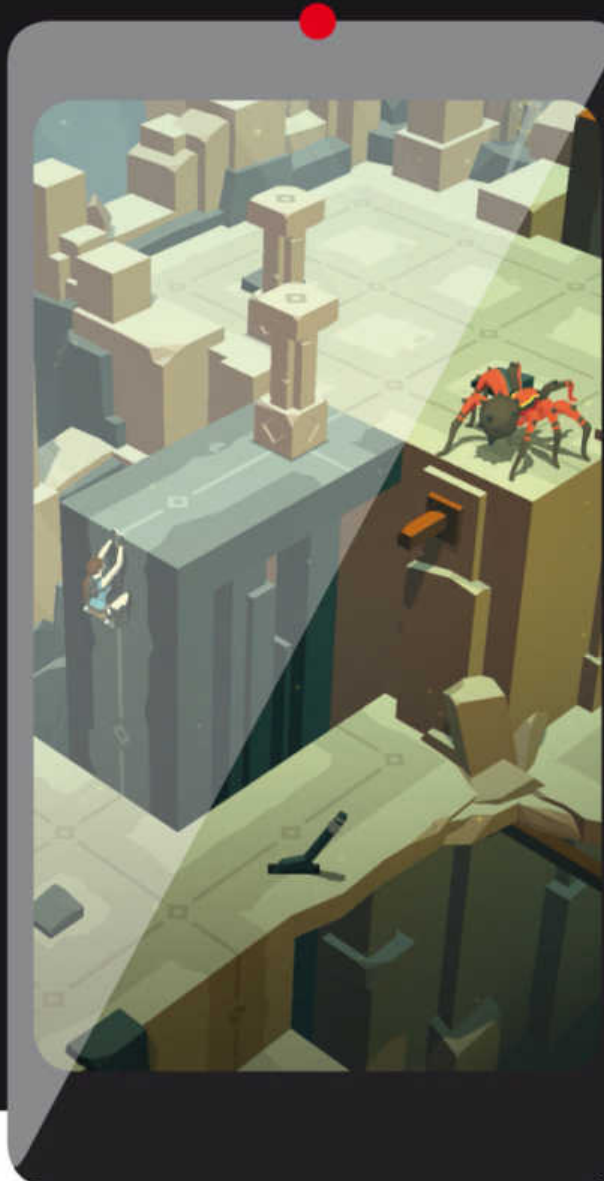
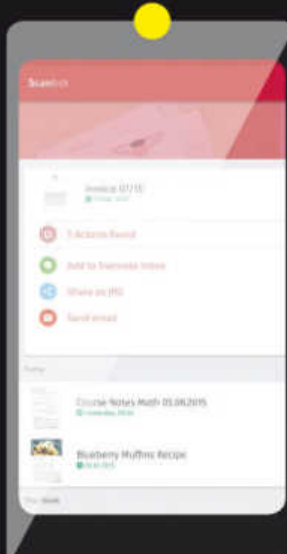
Stuff says ★★★★★
Efree / iOS

FOR
BRAINY
GAMING

● Lara Croft Go

Our favourite tomb raider has fared poorly on mobile, but *Go* is an eye-opening combination of exploration and puzzling. Visually, the minimal geometric forms recall *Monument Valley*, as does the clever nature of the challenges. Lara appears to be raiding ruins constructed by wags with a penchant for blocky architecture, sliding platforms and death traps. The difficulty curve is slight, but the experience is so captivating that you'll love every moment.

Stuff says ★★★★★
£3.99 / Android, iOS



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Snickers Workwear are smart working clothes and leisurewear that integrate innovative technology with working comfort and flexibility.

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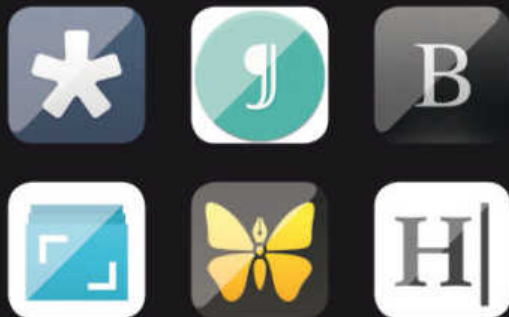


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Mini meme



WRITE, YOU LOT!

With the iPad Pro and Google's new Pixel C promising to make tablets as good for typing as laptops, let's take a look at the best writing apps



● Editorial

A desktop-class productivity app for writers, Editorial does the usual stuff (Markdown, previews, cloud save) and adds heavily customisable templates, snippets and workflow/automation tools. The downside: it's not on desktop. But get a decent keyboard for your iPad and perhaps you'll simply abandon writing on a PC.

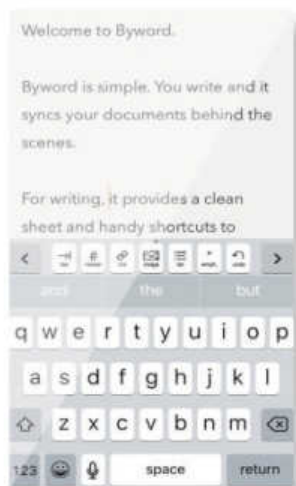
Stuff says ★★★★★
£7.99 / iOS



● JotterPad

The best pure text editor for Android, JotterPad gives you a simple, streamlined interface that ensures you concentrate on your writing. It includes Markdown support and a bunch of alternative typefaces; pay for the £4.48 IAP and you get typewriter scrolling, Markdown previews, syntax highlighting and snapshot saves.

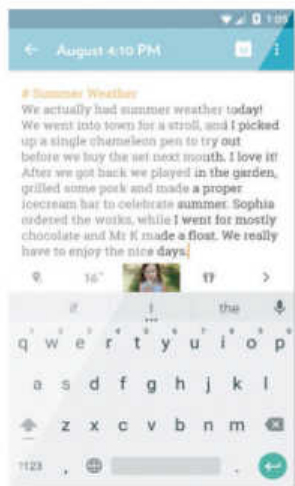
Stuff says ★★★★★
£free / Android



● Byword

There are loads of minimal text editors for iOS, but Byword is our favourite. The app is fast and simple to use, with a pleasing interface and handy features such as a Markdown keyboard bar that can be switched for document statistics. A single £3.99 IAP adds the means to publish your writing to blogs and Evernote.

Stuff says ★★★★★
£4.49 / iOS



● Journey

Some writing is mostly about capturing moments, even if the text is eventually edited and transformed into something else. Journey is a superb diary-based editor, offering word count, photo entry and weather/motion tracking. Add the £4.50 IAP and you get Markdown support too. iOS users should check out the similar Day One.

Stuff says ★★★★★
£free / Android



● Ulysses

Ulysses is far more than a text editor – it's a home for all your writing. Texts in your library can be searched, split, combined and transformed into PDFs, web pages and ebooks. The Markdown editor is also excellent, and the app astonishingly mirrors its equally impressive OS X desktop cousin in almost every way.

Stuff says ★★★★★
£14.99 / iPad



● Hemingway

This spellchecker for style ensures your writing has focus. Paste text into the web app and hard-to-read sentences are flagged, along with unnecessary words and instances of passive voice. It suggests alternatives, and congratulates you for not using adverbs – because adverbs are, apparently, evil. Don't believe everything Hemingway tells you.

Stuff says ★★★★★
£free / web



MAKING WAVES IN THE ART OF SOUND

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Innovation disrupts. When KEF collaborated with design guru Ross Lovegrove to create the mighty Muon, it rocked the world of extreme high end audio. Inspired by the mighty Muon's sculptural organic form and breakthrough technologies, the Muo makes new waves in the pursuit of art and sound perfection.



"Our Verdict: Great portable sound with a touch of luxury."
KEF Muo, What Hi-Fi?, September 2015

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KEF

OBSESSED WITH HIGH RESOLUTION

A NEW CATEGORY OF TV

Staggering colour and contrast, supreme detail, great sound... say hello to the future of television

Remember the first time you saw Full HD? The difference in quality? The immersiveness? Time for that again. This is the LG 55EF950V. It's the first flat OLED 4K TV ever, and what you've been waiting for.

Each pixel emits its own light, so one can be white while its neighbour is black – meaning staggering, infinite contrast and amazingly accurate yet vivid colour. But this TV also has more pixels – four times as many – as a Full HD TV. It makes for astonishing detail, as well as OLED's superb motion handling and true-to-life colour. Get one of these and you'll want to shout about it; to get people round to watch movies and sport, and play games.

And it's not just the picture. There's also the harman / kardon™ speakers that pack a punch not usually associated with ultra-thin screens. And the stand – which makes the TV appear to float. The set comes with LG's acclaimed webOS smart platform too, and with it, content from the likes of Netflix, NOW TV, BBC iPlayer and Amazon Prime.

This is not just a new TV, this is a whole new category of television.



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LG TV Featured EF950V

ED TV



LG 55EF950V

Incredible colour, contrast and detail on this flat panel combine with premium audio by Harman / Kardon™ and Smart TV with webOS

Display 55in OLED
Resolution ULTRA HD 4K (3840 x 2160 pixels)
Audio 2.0-channel

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE OLED

WHAT HI-FI?
 ★★★★★



Stuff
 ★★★★★

LG 55EG960V

Fusing OLED technology with 4K resolution, LG OLED 4K TV brings you the finest viewing experience imaginable.

Display 55in OLED

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Audio 2.0-channel



LG 55EG920V

Ultra-slim curved design, jaw-dropping detail, colour and black levels and premium sound by Harman / Kardon™

Display 55in OLED

Resolution ULTRA HD 4K (3840 x 2160 pixels)

Audio 2.0-channel



LG 55EG910V

A Full HD OLED TV with deep blacks, incredible colour and amazing detail – for a price that will amaze you.

Display 55in OLED

Resolution Full HD 1080 (1920 x 1080 pixels)

Audio 2.0-channel



LG 55EC930V

Not ready for 4K? Full HD OLED just as great. Its curve immerses you and webOS puts a world's worth of content at your fingertips.

Display 55in OLED

Resolution Full HD (1920 x 1080 pixels)

Audio 2.0-channel

Got £50 to burn?

Wow, Amazon's new tablet is cheap. But does it deserve a spot on your Xmas shopping list?

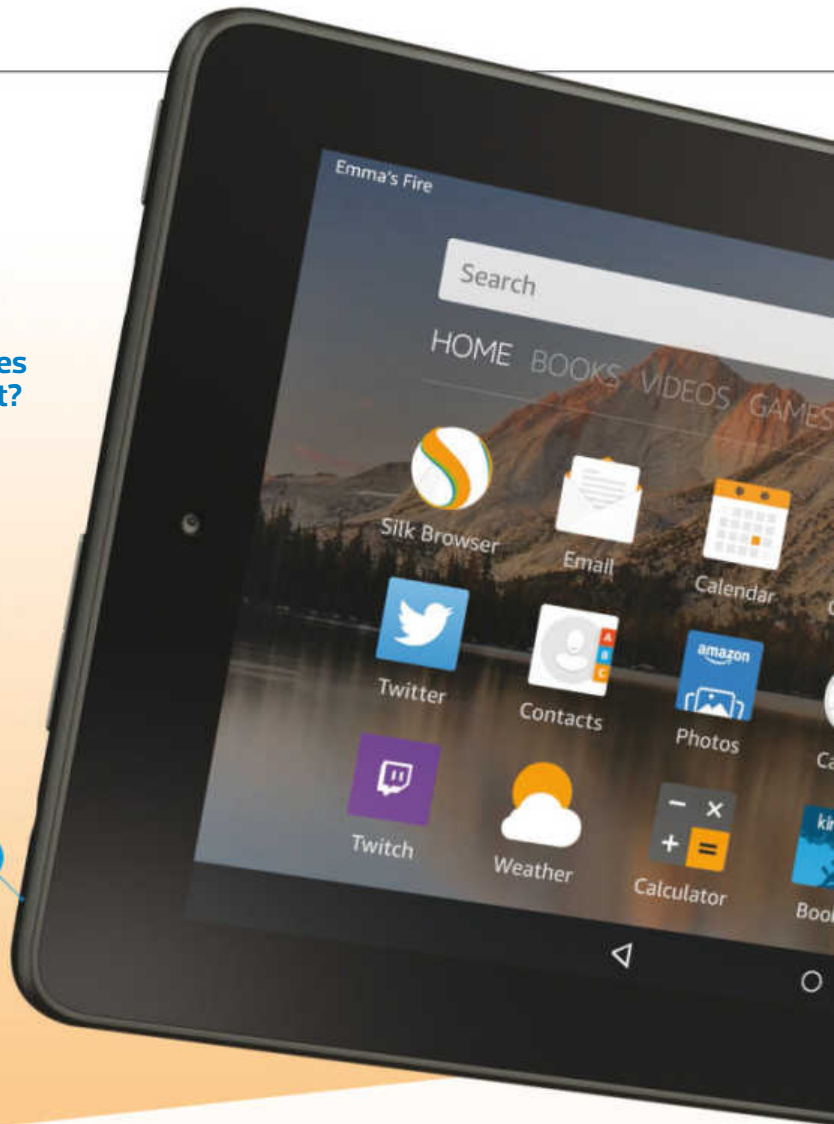
£50 / amazon.co.uk

There was a time when Google's first Nexus 7 seemed unbelievably cheap at £160. Then you could buy a Tesco Hudl 2 for £100 – and millions of people did.

Now, the Amazon Fire has blown even those devices and their low, low prices out of the pond by costing a remarkable £50 (with free, albeit non-drone, delivery). Buy five of the things and Amazon will actually give you a sixth for free, and that six-pack of tablets will still cost a lot less than the cheapest iPad Mini.

Yes, you do almost always get what you pay for. But before you dismiss the Fire out of hand, it's worth remembering that Amazon rarely makes a duff product (Fire Phone aside, obviously). Its devices are meant to keep customers subscribed to Prime and buying new goods when the fancy takes them; a shoddy tablet isn't going to help in the longer term.

Even so, my confidence in this device was low. For that amount of money, the Fire Tablet couldn't be any good. Could it?



1 Born survivor

The Fire feels reassuringly unremarkable, with a sturdy plastic case. At 313g it's 97g lighter than the Hudl 2, and it feels pretty compact. I spent a week chucking the Fire in and out of a bag without it suffering from scuffs or aberrations.

2 Pixel poor

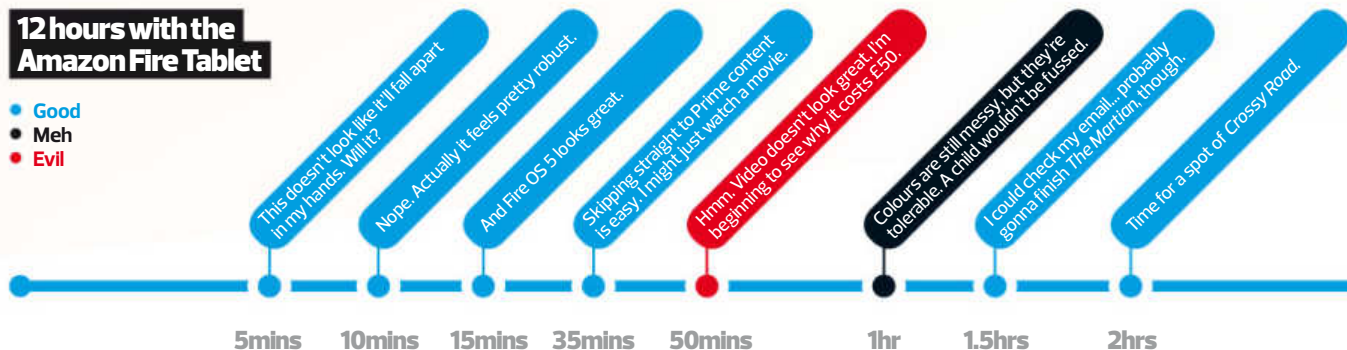
Many sub-£100 tablets come a cropper with their screens. No one is going to buy the Fire to bash out a strategy document. It's made for video and a spot of reading, but colours often appear as a dim fuzz with different tones blending awkwardly together.

3 Road to ruin

On paper the Fire HD looks well equipped for speed, with a quad-core 1.3GHz processor and 1GB of RAM. But in practice, I managed to crash the Fire jussy by playing *Crossy Road*, and basic system features like auto-rotate work at a dawdling, frustrating pace.

12 hours with the Amazon Fire Tablet

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



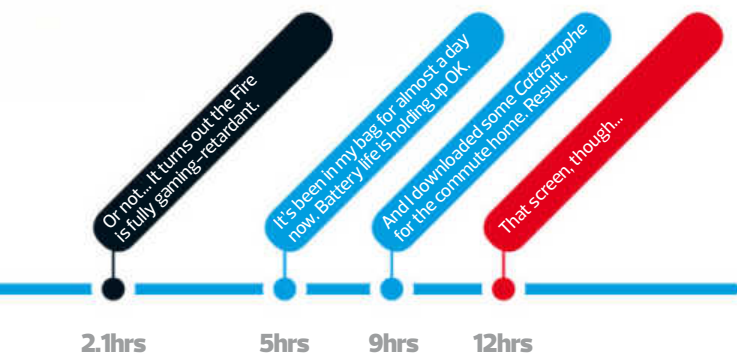


4 Prime position

The homescreen is nicely laid out with tabs for books, videos, games and music, and you can download Prime content for offline viewing – you can't do that with Netflix. Although the walled-in Fire OS still isn't a patch on iOS or Android, it does have 300,000 apps to try.

5 Lasting impression

You'll get five and a half hours of video from the Fire, enough for a train from London to Glasgow, and it'll last for a couple of days of intermittent use – not spectacular, but it'll do. Its 2MP camera is horribly grainy, but who takes photos with a tablet anyway?

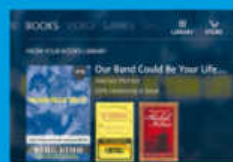


Tech specs

Screen 7in 1024x600 (171 ppi)
Processor Quad-core 1.3GHz
OS Fire OS 5 Bellini **RAM** 1GB
Storage 8GB (plus microSD)
Camera VGA front, 2MP rear
Dimensions 191x115x10.6mm, 313g

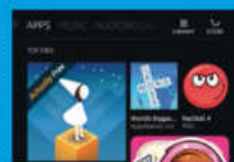
Fire OS 5 explained

Amazon's latest OS is designed as an all-you-can-eat buffet. Here are Bellini's four best features:



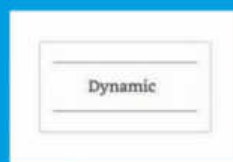
■ Read all about it

Recently viewed TV shows, books and features are collated into a nice layout that makes it really easy to get drawn into an episode of something. Prime subscribers get custom recommendations.



■ Going Underground

Amazon Underground is a new feature for Prime-ers that offers thousands of apps and in-app purchases for free. Titles include OfficeSuite Professional 8, Frozen Free Fall and, yes, Goat Simulator.



■ A novel approach

Amazon's new Word Runner feature displays ebooks word by word, automatically adjusting the speed for your reading. It's supposed to make you read faster, presumably so you buy more ebooks.



■ It's in the Post

Buying a Fire tablet gets you a free six-month digital subscription to the *Washington Post* (owner: one J. Bezos, aka Amazon Guy). A good deal if you like news, not so much if you're a six-year-old.



The Fire is a hellraiser with the face of a cherub, the Ferris Bueller of tablets. For all it does wrong, it'll happily talk its way out of trouble.

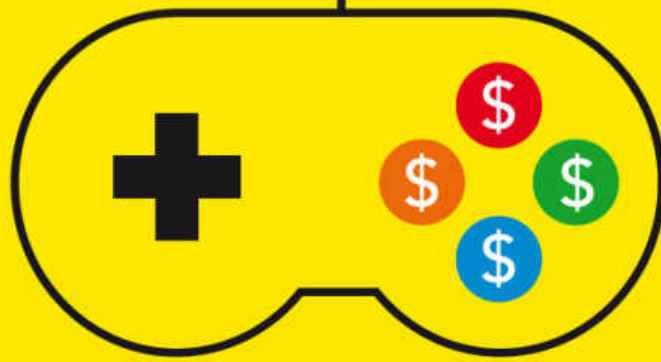
Its performance is acceptable, it's slow and has a dreary screen, but the battery life is sound. You'll get more mileage out of a Hudl 2 or EE's Harrier Tab, but it's 50 quid – what did you expect? @robleedham

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

It's rough around the edges, but the Fire is so cheap it still manages to offer decent value



AWARDS ISSUE 2015
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GET RICH PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

Gaming is the world's fastest-growing spectator sport, and the prize money is rising with it. We go inside an eSports team to find out what it takes to be a pro

[Words Guy Cocker Photography Adela Szajder]

For many gamers, the idea of watching someone else play is a little too close to the hours we spent being frustrated to tears by a console-hogging brother. But the new age of eSports is making this idea as dated as dusty game cartridges. It's propelling computer games up towards the previously unimaginable status of being the world's biggest spectator sport.

Don't believe us? Consider the fact that more people tuned into the *League Of Legends* World Championship final on Twitch.tv than the number of strawberry-scoffing tennis fans who watched the 2015 Wimbledon final on the BBC... or the

reality that there are now 134 million eSports viewers worldwide.

And it's not just audiences that are exploding like a well-aimed plasma grenade. In April, Jordan Spieth took home \$1.8m for winning The Masters golf tournament, one of traditional sport's most prestigious trophies. Four months later, a five-man team called Evil Geniuses picked up a cheque for US\$6.6m, equivalent to \$1.3m each, at *DOTA 2*'s 'The International' Championship. And all without having to use a stick to hit a ball out of a sandpit.

DREAM SPIRIT

With so many people watching and so much money up for grabs, we headed to one of the few UK-based ►

A BRIEF HISTORY OF eSPORTS

Milestones on the path to £4 million winner's cheques

1980



Space Invaders Championship
The first ever large-scale gaming competition. 10,000 people from across the US competed for the Asteroids cocktail table prize.

2000



World Cyber Games
South Korea created the gaming equivalent of the Olympics. It had everything: the big arena, lavish opening ceremony and medals.

2004



Major League Gaming National Championships
The first major competition to focus on console games. It now includes PC titles.

2011



Twitch
This Amazon-owned site allows people to watch tournaments and is ranked fourth for peak internet traffic in the US.

2013



Pro gamers become 'athletes'
Canadian player Danny 'Shiptur' Le made history by gaining a US P-1A visa, for 'Internationally Recognized Athletes'.

eSports tournaments to find out what all the fuss is about. DreamHack is a Swedish eSports organisation that is massively popular in its home country – over there, the finals are broadcast on SVT1, Sweden's equivalent of BBC One. Its first UK event was held at the Copper Box Arena in London's Olympic Park, and centred around Valve's *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*, a team-based PC shooter played by an average of over 600,000 people a day. On offer to those who enter: a prize fund of \$40,000, with \$20,000 awarded to the winning team. Not bad for a weekend's work.

One team hoping to win the top prize was Team Dignitas, one of the ten best *Counter-Strike* outfits in the world. The team started out ten years ago when two *Battlefield 1942* teams merged together, and it now has a total of 47 players competing in nearly all the major eSports games and events. They're managed by Michael 'Odee' O'Dell, a Brit who was once a professional gamer himself. He's in charge of pretty much everything – getting the team from tournament to tournament, training them in between events, even sending out the yellow and black Team Dignitas merchandise that fans can buy online. And now he's helping us shadow the players as they battle their way through the four teams that stand between them and the \$20,000 prize.

KIT AND MISS

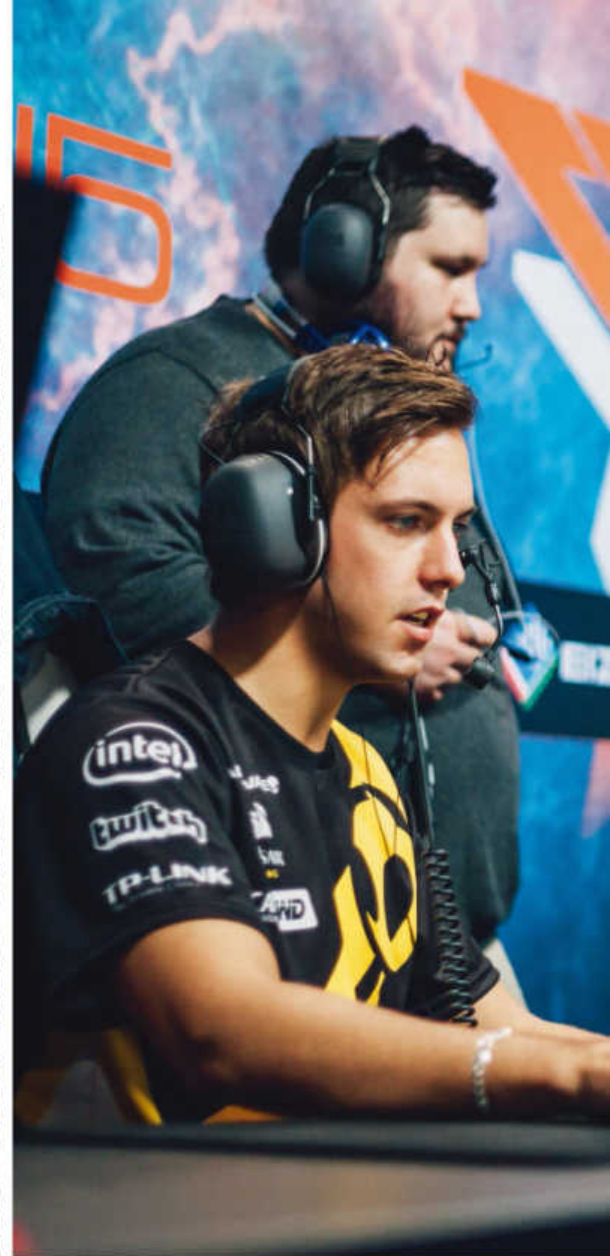
When we first meet Team Dignitas, they're half an hour away from their first-round battle against the Australian team Renegades. They're exactly as you'd imagine a team of young professional gamers: quiet and slightly awkward, but also polite and disarmingly honest. "No flame, but there are better monitors than the ones we're using here," complains Markus Kjærbye, the youngest member of the team, as if he's firing out an angry Reddit post. He's spent 30 minutes shooting bots on the DreamHack monitors provided by EIZO, but he's used to practising ten hours a day on team sponsor Iiyama's screens. In eSports competitions, the computers and monitors are provided by the organisers to make things fair, but you can understand Kjærbye's frustration – it's like making Lionel Messi swap the Adidas boots he trains in for a pair of flip-flops.

Despite their complaints, Team Dignitas go on to win two out of their three first-day games, ensuring passage into the semi-finals on the second day. Watching them live, it doesn't take long before we're being drawn into the thrill of it all – unconsciously slapping our foreheads when someone misses, or applauding the perfect headshot. Team Dignitas, meanwhile, appear completely emotionless – their intense concentration broken only by the occasional fist-bump from team captain Mathias Lauridsen after a victorious round.

THAT WAS LIQUID SNIPING!

It helps that the production standards of events like DreamHack are as good as anything you'd see on TV. Games like *Counter-Strike* have evolved to allow broadcasters access to instant replays and tactical diagrams – things you'd see if you were watching football on Sky Sports. But the real stars

"**COUNTER-STRIKE WILL BE ON TV IN 2016**"



are the commentators, who talk at about 250 words a minute about every element of the game, offering a level of insight that's lacking from much of the traditional sports punditry on TV. In fact, it's endearing how little concession they make to newbies. Listening to them is like watching your first episode of *The Wire* – you probably won't understand all the words they're using, but you kind of just absorb it anyway.

One of these commentators is Richard Lewis, a journalist who fell into commentating through an early love of eSports. Lewis believes that eSports is on the cusp of a major sea change; one that will see huge sponsors replacing PC component manufacturers and mainstream broadcasters showing events instead of Twitch. "What I'm worried about is big TV stations coming in and dictating to us how things need to be done," he says. "I think *Counter-Strike* will be on mainstream TV in early 2016. In a couple of years we will get pushed out by the mainstream guys."

In many ways, what Lewis is talking about is already happening: Team Dignitas is signed to sports agency IMG, which also manages the careers of Novak Djokovic and the Williams sisters.

LOSING ALL DOPE

The need to become legitimate to a mainstream audience is eSports' biggest challenge, particularly ▶



SAFE AS Mouses... THE TEAM DIGNITAS GAMING ARSENAL

THE HEADSET



Corsair H1500

Communication is vital for pro gamers, so a well-made headset with a good boom mic is an absolute must. The H1500 also offers 7.1 Dolby Surround sound processing, meaning players can hear the precise direction of gunfire and grenade drops.
£65 / corsair.com

THE MOUSE



Corsair Sabre Team Dignitas Edition

The team has its own mouse: you can change the 8200dpi laser sensor to be more or less sensitive and there are tweakable RGB lighting zones, eight buttons with Omron switches and a 1000Hz USB refresh rate.
£50 / corsair.com

THE KEYBOARD



Corsair K70

Pro gamers swear by mechanical keyboards, as the keys are smooth for easy double and triple taps, and they're durable as hell. Cherry MX Red switches are considered the best, and Corsair has created contoured and textured WASD and 1-6 keys.
£105 / corsair.com

THE SCREEN



Iiyama GB2488HSU-B1

This monitor is tailor-made for pro eSports players. The most important feature is response time – only 1ms, so there's basically no delay in the game and what the player sees. It's also an incredibly versatile monitor, with DisplayPort, DVI and HDMI inputs.
£120 / iiyama.com



as that audience is fragmented across different games, events and locations. The lack of a FIFA-like world governing body is probably a good thing given football's allegations of mysterious brown paper envelopes, but it also means there aren't universal checks in place to prevent cheating, match fixing, and more recently, doping allegations.

CS:GO player Kory 'Semphis' Friesen went on record recently saying that Adderall use was rife among professional players entering major competitions. A psychostimulant usually prescribed to treat ADHD, Adderall can be abused by people who want to concentrate for long periods of time – which perfectly describes pro gamers.

Odece plays down the effectiveness of these stimulants, although he says he welcomes the idea of random drug testing in eSports. "I'm sure doping

goes on but I've not seen it, and I don't want to," he says. "That said, I've always wanted random drug tests. I want the arena to be fair for everyone."

So far, only the Electronic Sports League has laid out a testing policy – it will run random saliva tests at its competitions, with penalties ranging from deductions to prize money and tournament points, to disqualification and up to a two-year ban.

TOUGH AT THE TOP

While playing *Counter-Strike* for a living sounds fun, the reality is that the number of professional spots available is about as limited as Formula One driver seats. There are 16 full-time professional *Counter-Strike* teams – with five players per team, that means there are roughly 80 people in the world who can call playing it a job. Compare that with how many professional footballers there are in England and Wales alone – roughly 4500 – and you can see how rare professional gaming jobs are.

It's also a classic catch-22 situation: if you want to compete at the top level, you need to be able to quit your job to practise, but you can't quit your job unless you're being paid by a professional outfit like Team Dignitas. LGB Female is one of the few eSports teams made up of women, but they all have full-time jobs or university studies as well. "We're working ▶

IT'S NOT ALL COUNTER-STRIKE...

Not too handy with a sniper rifle? These elite games could make your eSports millions:

HEROES



League Of Legends

The most popular PC game in the world is free to play, but *LoL*'s incredible depth makes it perfect for eSports. Its Championship series runs all year round, and last year the final was watched by 27 million people.

BALLS



FIFA

Yes, all those weekends playing *FIFA* online might have been time well spent. *FIFA* isn't anywhere near as lucrative as the top titles, but you can still win the Interactive World Cup – last year's winner picked up \$20,000.

TROLLS



DOTA 2

The prize pools for the *Defense Of The Ancients* sequel are the biggest in eSports, funded by players buying in-game items. At 'The International' 2015 the total prize fund reached \$18.4m, the winner taking over a third of that.

GUNS



Call Of Duty

CoD has grown massively over the last couple of years to overtake *Halo* as the console eSports shooter of choice. Thanks to support from publisher Activision, the game is easy to broadcast and commentate on.

"I'M SURE
DOPING GOES
ON IN ESPORTS"

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Have the control
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from mobile



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Geolocation



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Installation

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HOW TO BECOME AN ESPORTS PRO

STEP ONE

Choose your weapon

Specialisation is key if you want to make money. The most popular games with the biggest prize pools are *DOTA 2*, *League Of Legends* and *StarCraft II*, but *FIFA* and *World Of Tanks* are less competitive yet still have tournaments with decent prizes.

STEP TWO

Watch the pros

Simply going on Twitch can be highly educational. "You learn by watching the pros," says Joakim Karlsson, an amateur *Super Smash Bros* player with big ambitions. "At big events, I might get to play against a pro and learn from them directly."

STEP THREE

Find some teammates

The big shooters and MOBA games are all played in teams. Head to eSports events to find people to pair up with. "There are 17 million people playing *Counter-Strike* alone, so you're bound to meet someone you click with," says LGB's Aurora Lyngdal.

STEP FOUR

Get livestreaming

Livestreaming can bring in revenue to help you expand, according to Tom 'Syndicate' Cassell, the first Twitch user to hit 1m subscribers. "It's easier to get noticed if you're livestreaming," he says, "and it's much better to do it live than put it on YouTube."

STEP FIVE

Get scouted

As some point you'll need to join a pro team, with coaching – a role Odele performs with Team Dignitas. "One of our players kept missing shots," he says, "and we realised it was because he was breathing too fast. We taught him techniques to control it."



from 8am to 4pm and then you get home, have a quick dinner and you're playing from 6pm until late in the evening," says team captain Aurora Lyngdal. Inevitably, female players also have to face discrimination. "There's a mentality that girls can't play," admits Lyngdal. "Sometimes there's a feeling that the fans don't want us to be there. That mentality needs to go away and then a lot more women will come to the fore."

She thinks it will take another couple of years for LGB Female to be competing in the same tournaments as her male counterparts. But when they do break through, they'll at least be competing in the same tournaments as the boys, unlike most sports, which are segregated by gender.

THE HALO EFFECT

Sadly for Team Dignitas at DreamHack London, they fell short of winning the \$20,000 prize, being knocked out in the semi-finals by their arch rivals Team SoloMid. Their consolation prize was \$3000 – not a bad haul, but also not a lot to split between five people and a manager.

Still, the team left in high spirits – it had another tournament to enter with a much higher prize pool later in the week. Performing well in tournaments is also more about satisfying sponsors than winning

"SOME FANS
THINK **GIRLS**
CAN'T PLAY"

prizes – SuperData research estimates four fifths of all eSports revenue comes from sponsorship.

As we tried to talk to Team Dignitas about their defeat, we were interrupted by a group of fans wanting autographs. Mostly they had T-shirts or notepads to sign, sometimes it was a tattered mousemat, but the players dutifully signed whatever was handed to them, usually without a word uttered between either party. It was noticeable that one member in particular, the Bieber-esque Markus Kjaerbye, got plenty of attention from female fans.

We brought up the issue of groupies, but he was coy and tried to change the topic. Overhearing our conversation, his teammate Andreas Lindberg made a gesture suggesting the 17-year-old does OK with the ladies. Clearly, getting to play games all day is just one perk of being an eSports star. **S**



The best soundbar?

The experts think so...



Home Cinema Choice 'Best Buy',
July 2014



Trusted Reviews 'Recommended',
October 2014



What Hi-Fi? Awards 2014,
'Product of the Year'



AV Forums 'Highly Recommended',
July 2014



Tech Radar '1st in Tech Radars
Top 10 soundbars', March 2015



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Disc o' tech

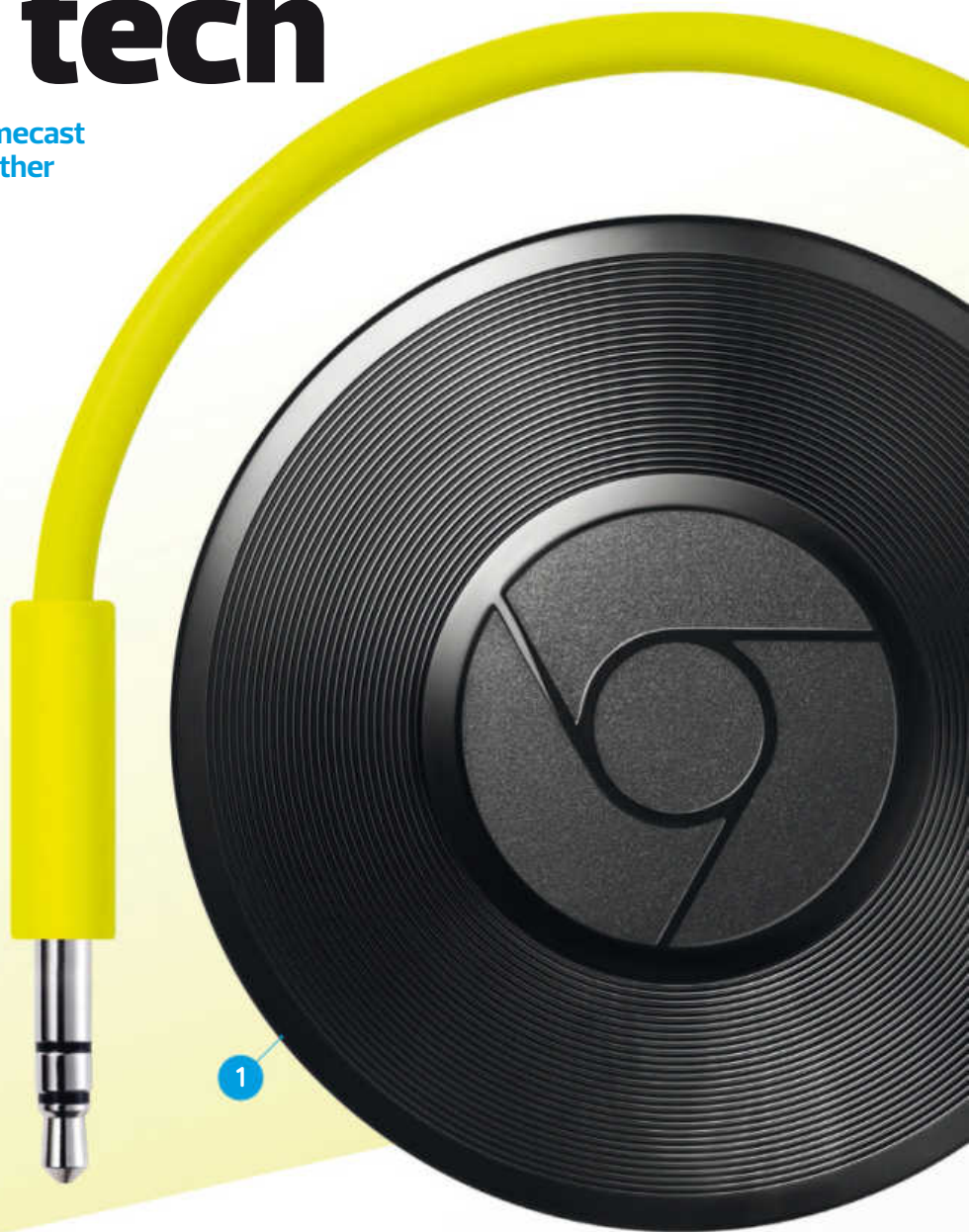
Google's new vinyl-styled Chromecast Audio lets you play Spotify and other services on any old hi-fi

£30 / store.google.com

In case you're one of the four people who didn't buy Google's original Chromecast last year, we'll explain: it looks like a USB stick, but you plug it into the HDMI port in the back of your TV. Then you open Netflix or iPlayer (or a lot of other apps) on your phone/tablet, press the little 'Cast' button that magically appears, and boink – the thing you want to watch appears on your TV.

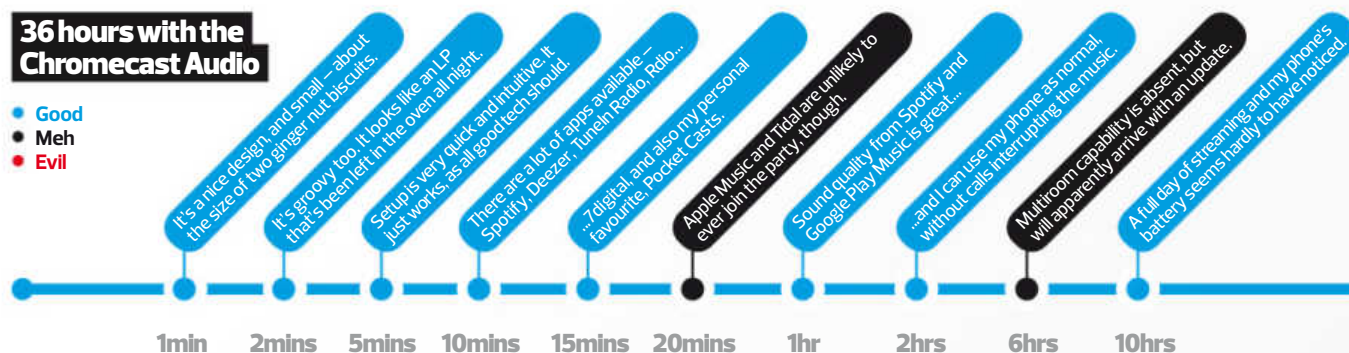
The really clever thing about Chromecast is that it only looks like you're streaming TV from your phone; in fact, the device is playing it directly from the internet, which saves your phone's data and battery and makes everything faster and smoother. It's cheap, easy to use and cleared the field of other streaming methods last year, selling over 20 million units.

And now, Chromecast Audio has arrived to do the same to your hi-fi. Plug one of these into any audio setup, open up Spotify, and you have a connected stereo for £30. Yes sir, but can it boogie?



36 hours with the Chromecast Audio

- Good
- Meh
- Evil





1 Start me up

Setup requires the Chromecast app (Efree, iOS/Android), and the whole process only takes a minute or so. For any remotely decent speakers, go into settings and check the 'High Dynamic Range' box, which dramatically increases the sound quality.

2 Simply the guest

Guest mode means people can play music on your Chromecast Audio without joining your Wi-Fi network. Thankfully, it's easy to turn this off once you decide that your guests have heard enough Kylie and they need to hear Tool's *Lateralus* all the way through again.

3 Caster of applets

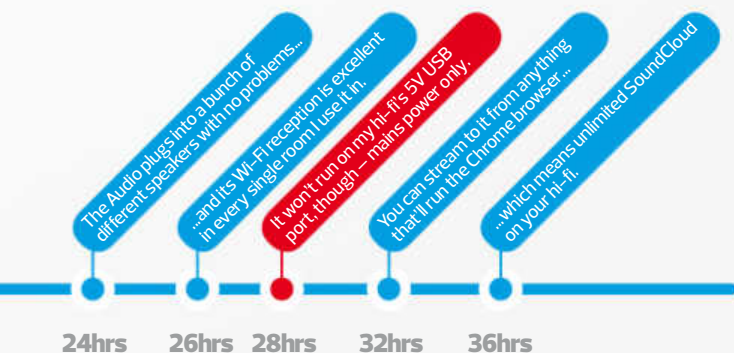
In the Spotify app, a 'Devices Available' tab appears. You tap it, select the Audio, and you're away. In Google Play Music it's easier still, with a proper Cast button. You can also stream audio from a Chrome tab, which is great for SoundCloud, Last.fm or YouTube.

4 Wi-Fi wins in the stream

This is much better than streaming via Bluetooth. There's no interruption from calls, almost no battery drain, and your phone doesn't have to stay near the speaker. And unlike streaming via DLNA, you don't have to give up your phone's Wi-Fi connection.

5 Sweet phone audio-charmer

Sound quality is great: the Audio streams at the highest bitrate the app will allow, so with Spotify Premium set to 'auto' and a decent broadband connection, it'll stream at 320kbps. Using a browser, the quality varies with the source, but it's still very capable indeed.



The other new Chromecast

Google's TV streamer has also been updated, so do you need to rush out and buy a new one?



1 It looks nicer

It's a fancy design, but this won't make any difference to you because you'll only see it when you take it out of the box. It could have a picture of a naked Patrick McGoochan on it for all I care - once in use it disappears behind the TV.

2 It's faster

Loading a Netflix or iPlayer show took less than 10 seconds on the old Chromecast, so while loading times have improved, you'd have to be an incredibly impatient person for this to matter. Still, there's almost no wait.

3 It's got good Wi-Fi

This is the real reason to consider upgrading: the new Chromecast has noticeably better Wi-Fi reception, which means it'll work much better for a second/bedroom TV that's further from your home's router.

4 Games and photos

Two other neat additions: Google Photos support means you can cast your snaps to your telly, and your phone becomes a controller for Android games. If you're a fan of the new Google Photos, it's worth a go.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

If you already own a Chromecast there's no need to upgrade, but games and photos add new reasons to try one



This is so much more convenient than Bluetooth streaming - the connection happens in the app you're using, you don't waste your phone's battery and you can wander into another room without the music cutting out. Pair that with excellent sound quality and a nice, unobtrusive look, and you've got yourself a real winner. @willydunn

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

It's simple, works with a huge variety of apps, costs as much as a couple of CDs and sounds great



TIME FOR JET POWER

Meet the Casio G-SHOCK GPW-1000 – the watch that combines proper style with chopper tech

“Wherever you are in the world you’ll have your timezone sussed and your timekeeping bang-on perfect”

Achieving to-the-millisecond accuracy thanks to technology usually found in the cockpit of jet helicopters, the Casio G-SHOCK GPW-1000 is the all-action premium wristwear you’ve been waiting for.

With its world-first GPS hybrid radio wave reception system, the GPW-1000 can receive both low-energy radio wave transmissions and GPS time and positioning signals, so wherever you are in the world you’ll have your timezone sussed and your timekeeping bang-on perfect.

Talking of bangs, you needn’t worry – accidental whacks, scratches or rogue liquids won’t bother this incredibly tough timepiece. Casio’s TRIPLE G RESIST construction means

it’s designed to withstand three types of potentially damaging gravitational impacts – shocks, centrifugal forces and vibrations. It’s also built to resist freezing temperatures, high-water pressure and magnetic fields. Throw in the world’s smallest motor, solar power generation, and a carbon fiber strap and it’s clear this watch will last.

So whether you’re a climber, an Antarctic hiker, or even a jet helicopter pilot, this watch will never give up – and will easily stand up to the demands of you doing what you love.

Of course, if you just want the most accurate, innovative and stylish timepiece out there, then the Casio G-SHOCK GPW-1000 will do the trick for you, too.



LIKE A DIAMOND

Give that bezel a fondle – it's coated with a Diamond-like carbon that feels as premium as a five-star hotel and is also ultra-resistant to scratches



READ MY FACE

With its sapphire crystal coated face, the G-SHOCK GPW-1000 is both fiercely anti-scratch and non-reflective for the ultimate in readability



JET SET

Get a handle on whether you're coming or going with Dual Dial World Time, which displays two timezones at once so you can keep one step ahead of your jetlag



LIGHT OF MY LIFE

Further enhancing its outdoorsy credentials, the GPW-1000 boasts a high-brightness LED for clear reading when you're in a dark, dangerous place





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Now is the winter of our UHD content

Great news: it'll be dark and freezing for the next six months. The perfect excuse to get sofa-licious with a huge new telly...

BEST FOR...
VERY RICH
PEOPLE

Lil' feet

You don't need a super-wide bench: those feet can be positioned at the edges or near the centre of the screen.

Sony KD-75X9405C £6000 / sony.co.uk

What's the story?

You don't believe in compromise. You don't have time for silly things like logic and practicality. You'd happily knock your living room wall down if you hadn't already done so. Your life is dope and you do dope things. Nothing is going to get in the way of you sailing your flagship television.

If that sounds like you, then you need this TV in your life. Why? Because it's 75 inches of holy cow. It is a monolith straight out of *2001: A Space Odyssey* – only

with uncharacteristically large speakers at each end.

This is Sony's top-of-the-line TV – their other models this year pale in comparison to this thing. It benefits from the company's best processing tech, and is reinforced by Google's Android TV. You'll want a couple of willing friends to help install it. And remember to lift with your legs, not your back.

Picture perfect?

Yes, it is, basically. That picture is thrilling. This is the reason to get

into ultra-high-definition TV. It puts the 'phwoar' into 4K, and nobody will be able to walk past without staring.

You'll want to spend a little time calibrating the picture first, though – the default setting is so bright you'll be squinting like Clint Eastwood. Sony has had a good handle on sharpness for while, but this is something else.

This is the sort of picture that lets you see exactly how much hair gel Paul Hollywood uses. The colours are fierce, yet somehow

just subdued enough not to look unnatural, and the proper speakers make a difference. Android TV is a little disappointing, however. It's a bit clunky compared to LG's WebOS and Samsung's Tizen interfaces, and could do with more apps.

TECH SPECS

Screen size 75in

Dimensions 193x104x32cm (including feet)

HDMI 4 USB 3 Weight 56.8kg

STUFF SAYS This is an absolute beast of a TV, with a price to match ★★★★★

BEST FOR...
SAVING
CASH



Not quite
what it seems

Forget that unusual John Lewis branding, this is basically a bottom-tier LG. Bargain.

John Lewis 55JL9100 £900 / johnlewis.com

What's the story?

John Lewis? You mean the place where they sell biscuit tins, monogrammed handkerchiefs and stationery? Making TVs? Seriously? Yes, really. But don't worry, the world hasn't gone mad. It's John Lewis branding everywhere (well, the bottom of the screen and remote) but in reality this is a partnership with LG, which 'powers' the TV.

Translation: LG made a TV and John Lewis slapped its logo on it. There's not even an attempt to

hide the massive 'LG' embossed on the TV's rump. But this is the option for those who want a big 4K screen without paying big 4K prices. At £900, this TV is not that much more than some standard full HD models. And you still benefit from the best of LG, namely the lovely software and remote control.

Picture perfect?

There's a reason it's cheap. It's a pretty good picture, but don't go expecting the sort of video

performance that the Samsung and Sony are offering. This is a whole league beneath: you don't get nearly the level of subtlety and contrast that makes for a convincing image. There's not quite enough attention to shading, which does not give the right sense of depth.

Then again, there's still plenty going on to grab your attention. Colours pop – a little too much, perhaps, but this set favours punch over realism. It's also plenty sharp, thereby fulfilling

the minimum of its duties as a 4K telly. But it's the software that's the star – it's slick and intuitive, with no long loading menus.

A decent image with good web smarts for a lot less than the competition: compromise can be a good thing.

TECH SPECS

Screen size 55in
Dimensions 124x78x26.1cm (including stand)
HDMI 3 USB 3 Weight 19.7kg

STUFF SAYS Cheap but very capable, this is a fine 4K TV for those on a budget ★★★★★

Mr Wobbly

That stand is a little unstable, but you're fine as long as you don't shake your telly too often. We only do that about once a year.



BEST FOR...
CROWD
PLEASING

Samsung UE48JU7000 £1200 / samsung.com

What's the story?

Samsung is top dog in the TV market these days. This 48in display is small enough for the average living room but big enough to make guests coo. Samsung has even updated its smart interface, replacing its stale hub system for a slick new multitasking pop-up bar.

So it's the Labrador of the group and the most likely to claim your affection. Is there any catch? This is a mid-range model, sitting below the fancy SUHD sets,

where 'S' may stand for 'super' but could also be 'steroids'. That means you don't quite get the premium OMG factor, or the high-contrast future-proofing provided by HDR compatibility. Then again, HDR is still a way off, and this set offers plenty for your cash right now.

Picture perfect?

Not quite, but it's really darned close. It has everything you need: great performance, good looks, web-based smarts and plenty

of connections. Picture quality is stunning; super-sharp and clear in 4K, and brilliantly upscaled from 1080p and standard def.

Colours are just right, popping just enough to grab your attention but not so much that they'll sear your retinas. Contrast is nice too, especially by LCD standards: the Samsung has no problem juggling bright whites with murky shadows, showing off plenty of texture at both ends.

The sound isn't quite so superb but it's not bad – balanced and

never harsh, and better than most flatscreen TVs. Then there's that Tizen smart interface, with its smooth, fast multitasking. Jumping between apps is as easy as changing channels, but LG's similar WebOS has more polish.

TECH SPECS

Screen size 48in

Dimensions 109x68x37cm (including stand)

HDMI 4 **USB** 3 **Weight** 13.9kg

STUFF SAYS This is pretty much everything you want from a 4K television ★★★★★

Bless you

This stand is a bit silly. The wide back bit means you'll need a big rack or it's going to fall over every time you sneeze.

**BEST FOR...
CONTROL
FREAKS**
LG 65UF850V £1750 / lg.com
What's the story?

LG has been preoccupied with high-contrast, super-thin OLED TVs of late, which is all very well, but they're rather expensive. Thankfully the company still has an eye on good old LCD panels, and this is one of them.

Want a huge TV that could still fit under the roof and doesn't require a second mortgage? This 65-incher fits the bill. This model doesn't have top-tier specs but you do get some of LG's better features. Take the WebOS 2.0

interface, for example. That's been updated, and runs all aspects of this TV. This is welcome news considering how good the original was. There's also a lovely new remote, which puts an end to that silly thing TV companies do where they give you two different remotes to lose.

Picture perfect?

The picture isn't the star of the show here. It's fine, but it's not going to have you mesmerised and drooling in appreciation. Its

greatest strengths are resolution and colour. It's clean and sharp, but not overdone and artificial. The colours are rather fetching, but it's not a hugely nuanced set – especially when it comes to the subtle shading required around contours. Contrast isn't amazing either – those blacks really ought to be darker.

The good news is, it's a pleasure to use. WebOS 2.0 is a faster, slicker, more intuitive version of WebOS, which lets you jump from terrestrial channels to web-based

apps without any annoying home hubs or waiting times. The new remote is basically perfection, with motion sensors for those who want to point and click at the screen, and plenty of old-school buttons for those who don't.

TECH SPECS

Screen size 65in
Dimensions 145x90x27cm
(including stand)
HDMI 3 USB 3 Weight 32.8kg

STUFF SAYS Not the best-looking thing out there, but it's big and easy to use ★★★★★



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A MONTH WITH THE APPLE iPhone 6S PLUS

Push it real good

We love the buzzing 3D Touch on the iPhone 6s, and it promises to be even more effective on a larger screen. But will the 6s Plus prove just too hefty to handle?

from £620 / apple.co.uk



Live Photos, 3D Touch, a better snapper with new abilities: there's a lot to work with.

DAY 01

First, a confession: my mitts are not 6s Plus-sized. They're used to the 4.7in iPhone 6, because that's about as much phone as they can safely handle. It'll be a miracle if Apple's latest phablet survives this next month without caressing a pavement.

So why am I bothering with the 6s Plus? Because, on paper at least, it's the best iPhone. Unlike the 6s, it has a full HD 5.5in screen, an ample 2915mAh

battery and optical image stabilisation (OIS) to help avoid blurry shots. Best of all, it seems to have been built for 3D Touch, the fancy feature that's meant to be the most revolutionary thing about the new iPhones.

This is (sort of) Apple's answer to the styluses of Samsung's Galaxy Note phones. It's a way of doing more with your screen and quickly navigate around iOS 9. I've used 3D Touch's

predecessor, Force Touch, in the Apple Watch and that ultra-thin MacBook, but this nifty bit of tech has been refined for the new phones. By firmly pressing down on your 6s Plus's screen, you can perform a variety of time-saving actions with 3D Touch. You can glance at the contents of an email, check the location of an address, tap on a quickfire shortcut to skip to an in-app action. Scrimping on a few swipes might not sound like a big deal, but they add up to quite a difference.

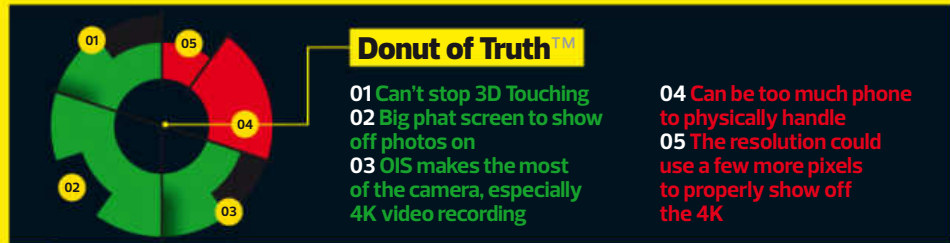
Another improvement that strikes you is the upgraded 12MP

camera. I'm trigger-happy to say the least when it comes to taking iPhone photos, and this device has really brought out the Instagram addict in me. The test shots I've taken are bright, detailed and full of natural tones – much better than what you'd get from the 8MP snapper of the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus.

Colour replication is especially bang on. I hate it when I upload photos and they end up looking oversaturated, and completely unlike what I captured in the first place. That's not the case with the 6s Plus. So far, so good for this great, big lump of iPhone.

Scrimping on a few swipes with 3D Touch might not sound like a big deal, but they add up to make a difference





Tech specs

Screen 5.5in
Retina HD
1920x1080
(401ppi)
OS iOS 9
Processor
Apple A9
Cameras 12MP
with OIS rear,
5MP front
Battery
2915mAh
RAM 2GB
Storage
16/64/128GB
Dimensions
158x7.8x7.3mm
Weight 192g



DAY 07

Although it's nearly slipped out of my hands on several spontaneous photo-taking occasions, my 6s Plus is still alive. Thanks to its improved snapper, I've taken a bunch of killer photos with a load of detail that my former iPhone wasn't able to capture. OIS really makes a difference when it comes to shooting indoors and at night. By reducing the effect of camera shake, it's able to capture more light and take a clearer photo. This is either great or terrible news for fans of drunken bar snaps, I can't figure out which.

Either way, these photos are a great way to show off what the 6s Plus is made of. And so are the preloaded lock screen Live Wallpapers that you can make dance with the help of 3D Touch.

DAY 13

I don't do Quick Actions as much as I should with 3D Touch, but I've completely embraced using it to preview emails, messages and photos. The world needs 3D Touch on more third-party apps, though. Neither YouTube nor Uber supports it right now, and it'd be handy if they did. *Asphalt 8* flows like silk thanks to the 6s Plus's blisteringly quick A9 processor, but it would

be amazing to vary the accelerator by pressing harder, just like you'd gun it in a real car.

Speaking of touch, Touch ID on this monster phone is blazingly fast.

DAY 20

After three weeks into my time with the 6s Plus, I'm not looking forward to giving up its bumper battery life. Even though the new Plus has a smaller battery than last year's model, it's still able to last me through the day and then some, especially if I activate iOS 9's Low Power Mode.

But that big battery comes with a caveat: it takes a long time to charge. When I'm in a rush and the battery's low, I often find myself wishing I had the faster iPhone 6s to work with.

DAY 28

Right, it's decision time. Do I stick with the big, beautiful 6s Plus or regress to my old iPhone 6?

Although I might have got used to the 6s Plus's size, it's still an awkward familiarity. My commute has become a nerve-shredding experience. So although the Plus is a big deal, I'd still choose the smaller 6s. Because a dead phone is no use to me, no matter how beautiful its display is.

STUFF SAYS

An immersive experience thanks to that giant screen, but only if you can handle it

★★★★☆



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4 OF THE BEST

Smarthome gadgets

Custom-built 'home automation' is a thing of the past — now you can robotify your place by adding a few bits of clever kit



Little brother

The 1080p camera has an excellent night mode, but unlike the Piper and Nest Cam you can't use its mic to remotely shoo your cat off the sofa.

WORKS WITH...

The app's design is clean and intuitive, with an activity timeline and the option to add other people in your household so it only arms when the last person has left. It's a shame Canary doesn't yet talk to any other products or web services like IFTTT.



Base player

The down-firing light changes colour to let you know the mode (green for armed, yellow for disarmed). It's useful without being distracting.

Canary £160 / canary.is

What's the story?

Canary is the prettiest security cam we've ever seen. That might sound like being named a regional finalist in the 'best-looking bouncer' awards, but it's an important feature for a smarthome product that needs to be on permanent display to do its job.

Like its rivals Nest Cam and Piper, Canary promises to alert you to unwanted activity in your home by sending smartphone notifications,

along with live and recorded 1080p video, when it detects movement. It uses geo-fencing to automatically 'arm' itself when it recognises that you're out, and also packs sensors for pretty accurate measurements of your home's temperature, humidity and air quality.

All very impressive, though it's a features list that Canary doesn't (currently) live up to. The hardware is great, with its wide-angle camera serving up excellent video quality

even at night, and the manually controlled 90dB siren capable of rattling your windows. But software niggles mean it's currently more of a deterrent than a real burglar catcher.

Any good?

During our staged break-ins, its 'armed' mode (which enables motion-activated recording with mobile alerts) sometimes alerted us to movement within 30 seconds, but other times failed to

either record video or send us a notification.

We're sure these are early software niggles rather than terminal deal-breakers. And like the Nest Cam, we like the way Canary complements its free plan with a subscription option offering downloadable videos and month-long video histories. But its beta feel and lack of compatibility with other smarthome gadgets mean it's one to watch, rather than one to dash out and buy.

STUFF SAYS Handsome and promising, but too many software kinks ★★★☆☆



WORKS WITH...



The Yale's selling point is concealed in the battery compartment: a Z-Wave module that connects to a host of home tech, including SmartThings kit. With a little tinkering it can turn the lights on, set the heating or perform other magic when you open the front door.

Open sources

There are a number of ways to open it: type in a pin code, or use a key tag or card. You can also give visitors a code that expires after 24 hours.

My flat's flat

If the batteries die while you're out, you can get emergency power by holding a 9V battery to the two terminals on the bottom of the lock.

Yale Keyless Connected Smart Lock £130 / yale.co.uk

What's the story?

Smartlocks sound exciting, but so does being burgled, and not in a good way. So while there are flashier keyless locks, there is a lot to be said for Yale's solid history of not letting people into your house.

The back of this lock is a standard Yale nightlatch of the type you may already own, but the front is a touch-sensitive keypad that can be unlocked with a fob, card, code or – using an extra module – an app. It's

not hard to install – there's a handy measurement guide to help – although it does require you to drill two quite big holes in your door, so once you decide on it there's no going back.

Then you get to the manual. If you enjoy being enraged and confused, meet your new favourite book. As an internet user you're used to seeing coherent language and design sacrificed to technological advances, but this manual takes the freaking cake. It's the only

guide you have for navigating the lock's alien language of beeps and flashes, but it's badly written and contains important mistakes. We spent two hours figuring out the lock's settings and still unwittingly left a front door unlocked for several hours, at night, because Yale didn't employ a proper writer to compose and check its manual.

Any good?

Once you've gone into a fugue, eaten the useless manual and

then figured it out by trial and error, it's a good lock that has, thanks to its included Z-Wave module, the ability to work with other smarthome tech. We wouldn't trust it as the only lock on a front door, but the option to add and remove codes is neat as it means you can allow someone temporary access without having to get a new key cut. That said, a clearer user interface and simple app control are needed to make this a lock you'd properly call 'smart'.

STUFF SAYS Yale makes a great lock, but the 'smart' part needs work ★★★★★

Aurora domesticus

As well as coloured bulbs, you can also get Hue Lightstrips, lamps, ceiling lights, wireless dimmer switches... and cheaper white bulbs.

Lights, camera...

There are now a couple of SyFy films and an Xbox One game (*Chariot*) that synchronise with Hue so your lights respond to the action.

WORKS WITH...

Interestingly, HomeKit isn't in the Hue app because Philips has chosen to focus entirely on lighting, so to integrate your bulbs with the rest of your HomeKit devices you'll need another app. Insteon+ doesn't look amazing, but it is free and easy to use.



Philips Hue

starter kits from £150 / meethue.com

What's the story?

Hue has always been awesome. Intelligent locks, blinds, security cams and the like are all useful, but smart lighting is the sexy bit of the smarthome, and while Hue once stood alone in its own colourful world, recent updates mean it'll now play nice with loads of standards, most notably Apple HomeKit.

To integrate with HomeKit you need the new Bridge 2.0, which is available for £150 bundled with three coloured

bulbs or £50 on its own. And owners of the existing Bridge can get a 33% discount until 31 December.

It's certainly worth it for iPhone users, as HomeKit support also brings with it Siri voice control. "Hey Siri, turn my lights blue!" you'll say, and (with a little quip) Siri will. You will feel like a god.

Any good?

Apple HomeKit also includes support for 'Scenes'. Four are

preinstalled for when you get up, leave the house, return home and go to bed. You can add your Hue lights to any of these, or any new Scenes you fancy. Say "Hey Siri, time for bed!" and your lights can all switch off automatically.

If you've also got a HomeKit-compatible thermostat or door lock, these could be set to cool down and lock up with that same voice command. Or you can customise it the other way: program your Hue lights

to automatically turn off or on when a HomeKit-compatible sensor sees you leaving or entering your house, for example.

Essentially, Apple HomeKit adds lots of extra smarthome possibilities, but even on its own Philips Hue remains one of the coolest gadgets you can buy. And if you're not an Apple fan, support for Samsung Smart Things is also built in, and Nest Weave is on the way.

STUFF SAYS Still the sexiest smarthome kit, and it's now Apple-approved ★★★★★

Tanks for nothing

Bigger reservoirs for both water and beans would make top-ups less frequent, which would save a lot of time (and caffeine deprivation rages).

The strong trousers

Was the last cup too weak? You'll need to set it to 3-4 cups and activate the Strong setting if you don't want a tiny mug of wimpy joe.

**WORKS WITH...**

Until IFTTT support is added (which may have happened by the time you read this), the dedicated Smarter 2.0 app is the way to operate coffee-bot.

Twirl the dial for number of cups, tap to change strength and customise the Wake Up and Home modes.

**Smarter Coffee** £180 / firebox.co.uk**What's the story?**

Coffee's been far too stupid for far too long, hasn't it? Waiting for you to manually spoon it into a receptacle before being covered in near-boiling water. It needs an injection of intelligence to make getting a caffeine fix less of an effort for sleepy humans.

If the name is anything to go by, that's exactly what the Smarter Coffee machine is offering. True, you still have to fill it with coffee and water,

but you can pour in a whole bag of beans (it will also handle grounds) and a couple of jugs of water in one go, and then go completely hands-free with your coffee making.

Except for binning the used grounds so you don't have a percolator full of manky mush, of course, and giving it a clean every so often... OK, so this isn't an entirely hands-free experience, but Smarter Coffee does connect to your Wi-Fi and there's a dedicated app

from which you can start a brew with a single tap.

Any good?

Working upstairs or lying in bed? Press the button and (depending on how palatial your abode is) you'll instantly hear beans being ground into tasty oblivion before the water is heated and poured through them. Then, when you're ready (the hot plate gives you a 40-minute window), you can brave the trek to the kitchen

and find a jug of the delicious black stuff waiting for you.

You can create a schedule so it's ready for when you get up, and use location tracking to make sure it's ready when you get home from work. IFTTT support is promised soon.

Notifications for depleted water and beans would be useful so you could top up before bed and prevent a coffee-free morning, but all in all this is indeed a smarter way to get your caffeine fix.

STUFF SAYS Not the smartest of things, but smart by coffee standards ★★★★★

DroneGuard

Above & beyond



Protect the investment of your quadcopter with the perfect carrying system. Choose from two purpose-built options:



DroneGuard Kit – Be flight-ready with the ultimate modular carrying system from Lowepro. With a place for everything in this kit: quadcopter, transmitter, blades, action video camera, batteries, chargers, cables, tools and manuals. This unique and highly functional kit offers a perfect, out-of-the-box solution.



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Find out more at lowepro.co.uk/droneguard
Follow us on [twitter](https://twitter.com/loweproUK) @loweproUK
or call **0845 250 0792**.

Peripheral vision

Take a sensor from a system camera and a lens from a compact, give them a Lightning connector to click right into your iPhone, and you've got the DxO One

£450 / dxo.com

Worried your iPhone photos aren't quite cutting it? Not enough bokeh on your Instagram feed? Then DxO Labs wants a word with you.

The company, previously known among serious camera aficionados for its advanced image processing software, has just released its first camera, and it's an unusual choice. With no screen and almost no direct controls of its own, the One is a pricey add-on snapper for iPhones.

The DxO One clips on to your phone's Lightning connector and interacts with its own iOS app. It's a lot smaller than most compact cameras, but it adds a big 1in 20.2MP CMOS sensor, a high-quality glass lens with a wide (and adjustable) f/1.8 aperture, and the ability to shoot in the professionals' favoured RAW format to your iPhone shooting experience.

Is all that worth £450? To find out, I spent a week with this quirky little snapper hanging off the side of my iPhone 6s.



1 Fast learner

The One is small, lightweight and fairly unassuming to look at, but when you hold it in your hand it feels reassuringly sturdy. Simply slide down the lens cover, plug the One into your Lightning port, and the app automatically launches – you're ready to shoot.

2 Still crazy

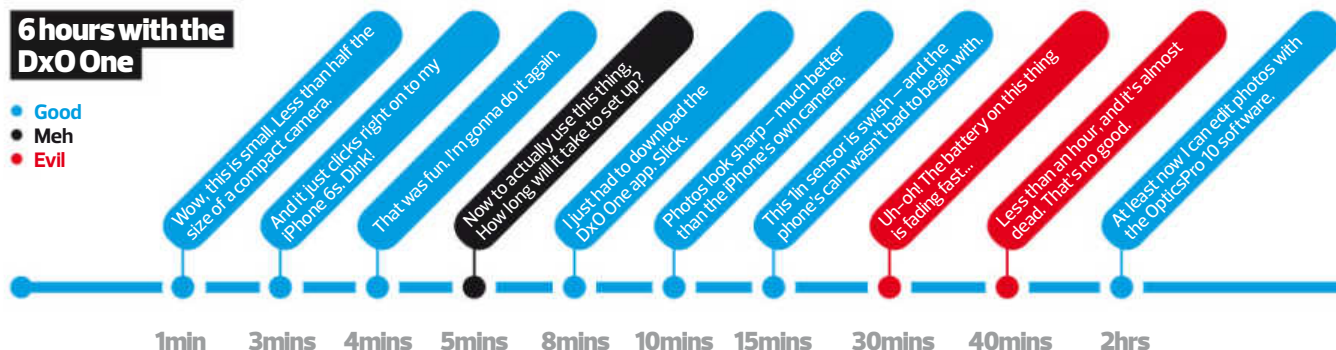
I was a little sceptical of what the One could really offer above what is already a decent phone camera – or at least, whether it could possibly offer anything worth £450. But the image quality it provides, at least where stills are concerned, is quite stunning.

3 Movie muscle

Video resolution only goes up to 1080p, which puts it behind the 6s's own 4K-capable camera, but thanks to the large sensor and proper lens, the videos are sharp and rich. That said, this feels very much a stills camera, with video as more of a bonus feature.

6 hours with the DxO One

- Good
- Meh
- Evil





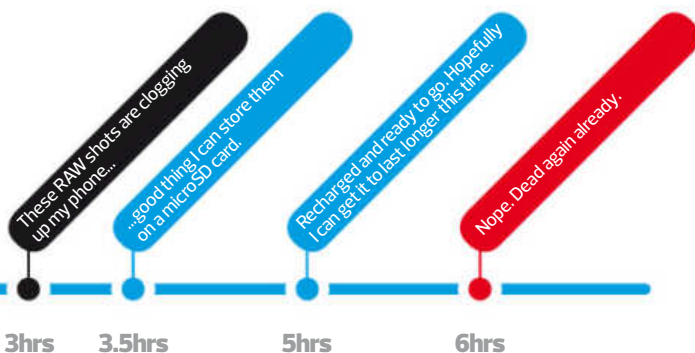
4

4 Appy snaps

Shooting in RAW and then using DxO's OpticsPro 10 software (free with the One, normally over £100) to automatically process the images into JPG, I found that the clarity of low-ISO images shot in good lighting is something no current phone camera can touch.

5 Easily tired

DxO says one charge is good for around 200 photos, and that may be true if you switch the camera off when not in use. But with the camera plugged into my iPhone 6s, I found it dropped 80% in around 40 minutes, during which time I'd taken only 30 shots.



Tech specs

Sensor 20.2MP 1in CMOS BSI

Lens 32mm equivalent f/1.8 to f/11

ISO range 100 to 51200

Image stabilisation Electronic (video only)

RAW shooting Yes **Minimum focusing distance** 20cm

Storage MicroSD card **Dimensions** 68x49x26.3mm, 108g

Photo wizardry

Thanks to its mighty specs, the DxO One blows most smartphone cameras out of the water. Here's how...



Very inch-arresting

The DxO One's sensor is the same size as the one in the Sony RX100 IV (£600) and the Nikon 1J5 (£300). At three times the size of the sensor in the iPhone 6s, it can take in a great deal more light.



ISO-tastic

As well as soaking up plenty of light, the DxO One is also more sensitive to it. Its ISO range runs from 100 to a night-vision-like 51,200. The result? Better snaps at night and indoors.



RAW! RAW! RAW!

If you like to tinker with your photos, then the ability to shoot in RAW is a real boon. It allows you to apply a much greater range of effects – far beyond what you'd find on Instagram or Snapchat.



Right back aperture

Unlike a smartphone's camera, the DxO One has a variable aperture from f/1.8 to f/11. This means you can take more fancy photos by adjusting the depth of field, and shoot in really bright light.



The DxO One's still image quality is superb, but it's the price of an entry-level DSLR, and the limited battery and lack of 4K detract from its appeal. It's a niche product aimed at those who are really concerned about pocket space but still fussy about quality. I've enjoyed using it, but if I had £450 to spend on photography, I wouldn't buy this. @samkielsen

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Portable and powerful, but needs more stamina and better video performance to justify its price



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Fantastic thrifty fox

It's not often a new budget phone really grabs our attention, so what makes the Wileyfox Swift so special?

£130 / wileyfox.com

■ There's a whiff of OnePlus magic about the Wileyfox Swift. This new contender has put together a £130 phone that crams in the specs you might have to pay almost £200 for elsewhere. An extra £30 will buy the Moto G, which is better in parts, but this is still a red hot bargain.

■ The Swift is similar in style and feel to the Nexus 5 (the old one, not the new 5X). It's 9.4mm thick, so a bit less chunky than the Moto G. There's an embossed fox-head logo on the back, which peels off to reveal a removable battery and microSD slot, and the display is protected by Gorilla Glass 3.

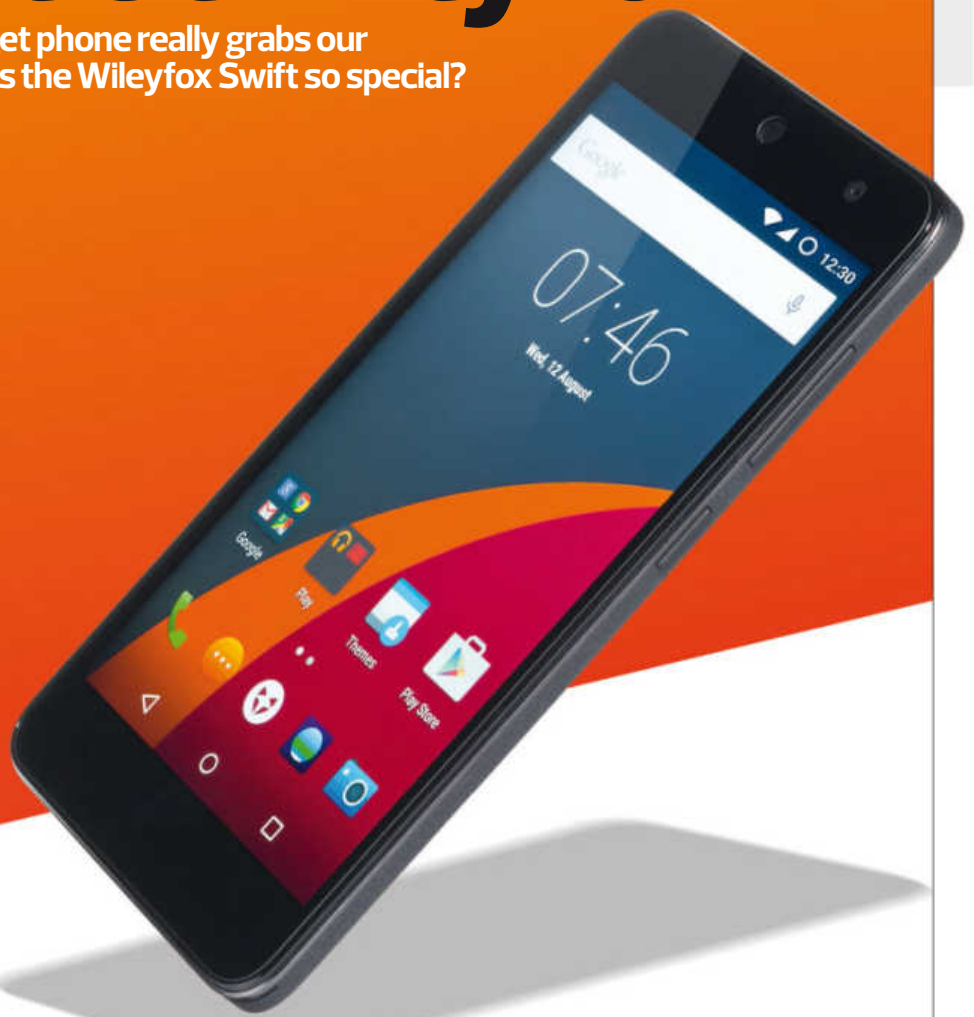
■ The display is insanely bright, which means it's great in direct sunlight but a bit over the top indoors. It has a 5in 720p screen, (like the Moto G), which is big enough for decent gaming and, while not 1080p, still pretty sharp.

■ The Swift runs Cyanogen 12.1, which means you can fiddle with the look and interface a lot more than with a regular Android phone. After all my mucking about with it, though, I ended up back at the rather stylish default settings.

■ Performance is generally good too, with almost none of the lag we've seen recently in some cheaper Androids. This is mostly down to the 2GB RAM and Snapdragon 410 chip Wileyfox has packed into the Swift – a lot of power for a £130 phone.

Techspecs

Screen 5in 1280x720 **Processor** Quad-core Snapdragon 410 **OS** Cyanogen 12.1 **RAM** 2GB **Storage** 16GB (microSD to 32GB) **Cameras** 13MP rear, 5MP front **Dimensions** 141mmx71mmx9.4mm, 135g



■ Great fox-pic-tations

The camera's sensor and lens are streets ahead of other budget Androids, and in good lighting it's excellent. Low light and HDR modes are let down by clunky image processing, though.



■ It'll last a good Wile

You'll get a good day's use out of the Swift, and some spare change off a charge. It'll last for about nine hours of looped video, which is just a bit less than the latest Moto G.

STUFF SAYS This brand new mega-value fox is almost a match for the Moto G ★★★★★☆

Wileyfox has its priorities in order – I'm pretty impressed
Andrew Williams



You can try to build a brand by getting rappers to use your product while sauntering stylishly out of a club... but we prefer Wileyfox's way. With the Swift it has quietly introduced a tremendous bargain of a phone. It's not often a new budget phone brand arrives and really grabs our attention – making the price as low as possible rarely works – but the Wileyfox Swift is something special.

nexus 5X

THE CHAMP

The Nexus 5X, sequel to the Nexus 5, is here and better than ever

Welcome to the perfect partnership in mobile phones. Two technology giants, LG and Google, have teamed up again to bring you the ultimate in brains, brawns, style and innovation with the Nexus 5X.

Sequel to the groundbreaking and popular Nexus 5, the 5X has taken everything we loved about its older sibling and turned the temperature up. Built by LG, it's all you expect from one of their phones: sleek, lightweight, stylish, easy to use and packed with the innovations we've come to love from LG.

From a fingerprint sensor on the back rather than the front to fit with the way you hold your phone, to the smudge-resistant oleophobic coating on the 5.2-inch display, LG know exactly how to make the Nexus 5X as secure, convenient and resistant as possible. While making sure it remains darn sexy, of course.

LG have provided the perfect protection for



the Nexus 5X's super-smart engine. Powered by Snapdragon 808, everything loads at full-throttle – the kind of speed you expect from a phone that damages your wallet, not from one as affordable as the Nexus 5X.

The brains don't stop there. It runs on Android Marshmallow, the freshest and fastest OS out

there and brings with it the Google Now personal assistant, OK Google voice search and Now On Tap, which will provide you with immediate and contextual info, whatever you're looking for.

The biggest step up from the Nexus 5 is the camera. The fast launching 12.3MP rear camera allows more light than ever thanks to larger pixels. It's the best all-round camera Google have ever put into a Nexus.

The Google Camera app and Google Photos app make sure you not only don't miss a thing with instant access to your camera but it also helps you to relive your memories at your fingertips.

Sometimes, sequels really can be better than the original.

THE BEST SEQUEL IN TOWN (BEWARE OF SPOILERS)

LG and Google know exactly what they're doing when it comes to phones. Together, they've produced a real humdinger



With all these innovations and advanced features, you might expect it to suck all of your battery life. Fear not, though. Your phone will last for up to 19 hours of talk time, and the USB Type-C connector produces nearly four hours of battery life in just 10 minutes of charging.

Sequel to the Nexus 5, the 5X has taken everything we loved about its older sibling and turned the temperature up

FIND OUT MORE lg.com/uk/nexus5x



Simply the best camera in a Nexus phone. Getting dark outside? No worries. The larger pixels mean you can still take sharp, rich photos like the sun is still shining. You can also shoot brilliant video with 4K video capture, while the 5MP front camera is great for selfie fanatics.



Google's best apps are pre-installed, including Photos, Gmail, Drive, YouTube, Chrome and Maps. 2GB of RAM offers a beefy back-up, while Android Marshmallow battery-smart features Doze and App standby give you battery power when you need it most.



PS4, PS3, Xbox One, Xbox 360 / destinythegame.com

Destiny: The Taken King

This is the biggest update to the *Destiny* universe yet... but at the price of a full game, does it offer enough to bring back lapsed Guardians?

My name is Esat, and I'm a *Destiny* addict. I'd rather not share my total playtime stats, but let's just say I've more than dabbled in this FPS/RPG hybrid. From the very first mission, set in a battlefield crawling with dying Cabal warriors, it is clear that *The Taken King's* story is light years ahead of the original.

Bungie's injected a good deal of variety too, with tons of quests to keep players occupied, plus new strikes and one new raid. The satisfaction you'll get from

working out all the intricacies, and eventually coming together with your team like a well-oiled rifle, is really quite something.

The real star of *The Taken King* is a new area, the Dreadnaught. It's a gigantic labyrinth of a ship with ominous dark hallways littered with skulls and bones, secret tunnels, and plenty of enemies to sink your bullets into.

The game also introduces three new subclasses to the *Destiny* universe – a Void-based Hunter, an Arc damage Warlock and a solar

Titan, adding a fun new element as each class has its own quest in which they discover their new powers. The Sunbreaker Titan is probably the most notable, as it offers a ranged super-attack and can summon the devastating Hammer of Sol. All the weapons look and feel excellent, and even the basic blue and green items pack a punch.

So is *The Taken King* worth £40? For loyal fans, absolutely. The new content, mechanical tweaks and quests are sure to make their inner

Guardians very happy. As for those fans who drifted away? If you left simply because you ran out of things to do, it's definitely worth a look. But if you've always been immune to *Destiny's* grind for loot, that may still be the case.

It's tough, and maddeningly frustrating at times, but when those big bosses fall and those rewards appear on your screen, it's all worth it. This is *Destiny* at its absolute best. See you on the Dreadnaught.

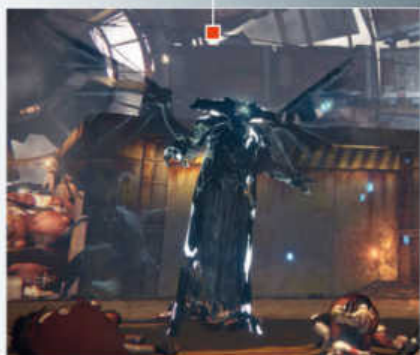
Esat Dedezade

STUFF SAYS Bungie has nailed it – we can't wait to see where we're flying off to next ★★★★★



We have no idea what that Fallen vandal is doing on the floor. Pure laziness.

A flaming hammer of Thor vs Sith lightning. So freaking metal, it hurts.



RIP, Dinklebot

Peter Dinklage's Ghost has been replaced by voiceover veteran Nolan North. Despite Dinklage facing a lot of criticism for his delivery, I have to admit that I preferred him over North, who sounds a bit like a cheery children's TV presenter.

The story itself is engaging and sees players take on the Hive God Oryx. You're number one on his 'To Kill' list, thanks to the fact that you disposed of his son Crota in the last raid (he was asking for it). He's so displeased, in fact, that he's corrupted all sorts of enemy races into his personal army of 'Taken', who want nothing more than to end your existence. The Taken enemies are dark, glitchy versions of familiar foes, and I love them. They remind me a little of the Flood in *Halo*, although they don't look as grotesque.

Each Taken enemy has a set of unique abilities. Fallen Taken Captains, for example, can now move at about 1000mph and shoot you with blinding waves of darkness. Then there's the Cabal Psions, who split in two when shot, or the darned Vex Hobgoblins that blast you with void cannons, forcing you to scream like a little girl.

I hammered through the main story in four hours, but that's by no means the entire pie, or indeed the main meaty filling, of *The Taken King*.

Match of the disc tray

When it comes to football simulations, *FIFA* has long had the edge over *Pro Evolution Soccer*. But when their 2016 editions go head to head, will the underdog bite back?

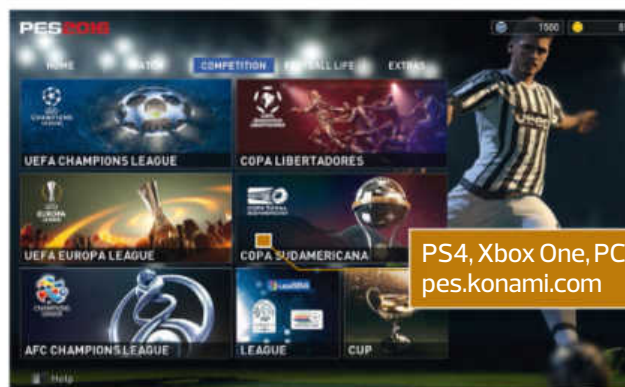
PS4, Xbox One, PC /
easports.com/fifa16



FIFA 16

vs

PES 2016



PS4, Xbox One, PC /
pes.konami.com

The first thing you'll notice about *FIFA 16* is a key one: it's harder to score goals.

In previous editions it was fairly easy to create space behind defences for attackers to occupy and then play passes into it. *FIFA 16*'s teams, however, hold their shape much more stubbornly. Neat one-touch passing and smart running are required to break through the lines.

Thankfully, EA has provided a new weapon to aid this: a driven ground pass, executed by holding R1/RB when you press the standard pass button. This plays the ball with much more force, making it harder for the opposition to intercept.

You might just need this aid to quick breaks, because teams don't give you long on the ball. Defenders are better at cutting out balls over the top, and goalies are off their line quicker than you can say 'sweeper keeper'.

EA has also added a piggy-in-the-middle drill to the pre-match mini-games. It's one worth

practising, as opposition players do seem more prone to making errors under pressure.

Pacey players seem less able to burn off their markers, but they can now use no-touch dribbling to get through instead, which involves holding L1/LB to literally stop touching the ball, tempting the defender into a tackle before bursting away into space. When you finally get it right it works brilliantly, allowing you to get half a yard on an opponent.

Arguably the biggest addition to *FIFA 16* is 12 national women's teams. The women's game is slightly less physical and the opposition doesn't press so intensively, so it feels a little more like last year's game... but hey, we gave that a five-star review.

Otherwise, this year's tweaks are perhaps more subtle than usual but this general tune-up is still welcome. It may well make it more frustrating, but also more rewarding when things click.

And by the time you do master it, it'll be time to do it all over again.

On the 20th anniversary of the franchise, *PES 2016* has stuck very firmly to its strengths – namely, goals. Nil-nil draws are the stuff of legend, while world-class strikes from West Glamorgan City (who you might think look a lot like Swansea) are commonplace. For the first time in ages, this makes it a genuine arcade-style alternative to *FIFA*'s simulator-esque charms.

Passing is fluid and razor sharp, encouraging creative, instinctive, attacking football – through-balls are particularly lethal and, unlike *FIFA*, it urges you to go for goal at every opportunity.

Defenders will infuriate and beguile you in equal measure, dribbling past three players in one movement before completely mistiming a header the next. Keeping a clean sheet is damn near impossible, but thankfully, so is getting booked or sent off. The slide tackle is more satisfying than ever, partly thanks to a reworked collision system, but

also because the referees are more lenient than Howard Webb at Old Trafford.

Each player is a unique specimen, meaning organising your team for an online match, or a world-beating side in Master League, feels not just important, but essential. I found myself entranced by the depth of the game's career mode.

Sure, it's irritating that you have to rename teams (unless you choose sides in La Liga, for instance, with whom *PES* has a licensing agreement), but online games are just as captivating as their offline counterparts. The game's matchmaking system also does an admirable job of finding a suitable partner.

Much like the real thing, then, *PES 2016* is a game of two halves. Licensing issues and defensive frailties mean it doesn't quite deliver the entire package. But the spirit of the game is here in spades, and just like it did in its heyday, *Pro Evo* places that spectacle above all else.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

A touch more challenging, but more rewarding to those who persevere

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★☆

Purists may scoff, but for thrillseekers and goal addicts, *PES* keeps hitting the target



In Max's world, road safety regulations just aren't what they used to be.

[Words: Tom Wiggins, Chris Kerr]



Xbox One, PS4 / rockband4.com

Rock Band 4

After a five-year absence from communal living rooms, Harmonix's party classic is back. But will its revival be more Limp Bizkit than Led Zeppelin?

Compared to the singular *Guitar Hero*, *Rock Band* has always been a more cooperative affair. It allows you to form a supergroup with your mates featuring drums, bass, guitar and vocals. This is probably the closest you'll get to headlining Wembley or looking good in studded leather (in public, anyway).

However, at £220 for its 'band in a box' bundle, *Rock Band 4*'s kit is expensive. Especially when you consider that games you play in person with others have virtually perished with the advent of *Call Of Duty* online.

Newcomers will find their fingers as nimble and accurate as a handful of eggy soldiers, but old-schoolers will undoubtedly be able to dive right in and feel at home. It's striking how familiar the whole arrangement feels. As before, all the instruments have been built to take a beating, even though the guitar still looks as though it's been lifted from a child's toy box. You'll be thankful for the sturdiness.

New to *Rock Band 4* is the freestyle solo feature, which allows

players temporary creativity. At a musically appropriate moment the pattern of blocks disappears and the guitar can be attacked however players see fit. It makes a welcome change, and translates even inarticulate slamming into something fairly audible.

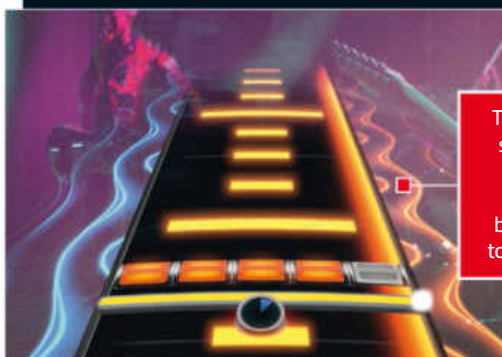
Where *Rock Band 4* fails to meet expectations is in its repertoire of 60-odd new songs. Classic rock and a smattering of 'alt hits' is the order of the day and the selection is unlikely to surprise. In contrast, the upcoming *Guitar Hero Live* lists Royal Blood, Sleigh Bells and Haim, and will reportedly launch with a catalogue of hundreds online.

In the age of music streaming, and when co-op stalwarts like *Halo* are ditching split-screen play, *Rock Band 4* feels like an artefact from another time. There's fun to be had here soloing away in a state of inebriation, or if you can cajole enough friends together to strum along to The Who, Van Morrison and the like, but there's a host of more modern multiplayer experiences to be found online.

Tom Parsons



Each instrument is a challenge as they require different forms of coordination.



The freestyle solo feature provides a break from being a slave to the rhythm.

STUFF SAYS A fun throwback, but it won't provide much in the way of longevity ★★★★★

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ACCESSORIES FOR SONOS

Media hoard

Hungry for new thrills? A spiky geek-trepreneur, a fun(ky) side project and some original sci-fi are *Stuff's* picks of the month

WATCH

Steve Jobs_cinema

Two studios, two directors and three stars: writer Aaron Sorkin's version of the Steve Jobs story passed through a lot of hands before arriving on our screens. With Danny Boyle behind the camera, Michael Fassbender steps in front of it as the Apple icon, portrayed during three pivotal product launches: the Macintosh (1984), the NeXT 'Cube' (1988) and the iMac (1998).

Unfolding like a stage play, the film shows Jobs to be the centre of a tornado of professional and personal drama. He battles with employees, the mother of his child... and the press, who clash with his perfectionism, jealousy and borderline God complex. Fassbender is tightly wound

and single-minded: his conviction overcomes his lack of physical fit for the part. Indeed, most of the cast seem to bring their best to the screen, with the ever excellent Kate Winslet keeping the show running as his assistant, and a heartfelt turn from Seth Rogen as Steve Wozniak.

With its sharp-tongued dialogue and backstage set pieces, *Steve Jobs* is too orchestrated to be the definitive take on a man's life or career, but it's obvious from early on that this is a portrait rather than an analysis. Perhaps appropriately given the subject, Boyle's film is slightly flawed but fascinating nonetheless.

James Luxford

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★☆



Terminator Genisys

_Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

Arnie takes some time off making meerkat ads to resurrect the T-800, but he's no longer the main event: Sarah Connor and a time-hopping Kyle Reese take centre stage in their fight against an OS that'll enslave all of humanity. It could be a critique of our reliance on tech, but that might be a bit generous.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆



Entourage

_Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

Fans of the TV show will know what to expect from the film: a vapid, silly, dirty fantasy fulfilment about a Hollywood A-lister and his three best mates fooling around with fast cars and easy women. It is, though, lacking the charm of the best episodes, and the roll call of cameos is desperate. It would get three stars, but Piers Morgan is in it.

Tom Parsons

STUFF SAYS ★☆☆☆☆

LISTEN



Return To The Moon

_El Vy

The National are many things, but cheery is not one of them. No wonder frontman Matt Berninger fancied teaming up with Menomena's Brent Knopf for a record full of rasping hi-hat claps and grooves you can pull shapes to. Even if *Return To The Moon* doesn't always live up to its funkadelic promise, it's a lot of fun.

Unleashed from his sourpuss straightjacket, Berninger flies into full-on

esoteric mode. Songs like *Paul Is Alive* and *Silent Ivy Hotel* are peppered with wry one-liners, underlined by teasing organ riffs and licks of ghoulish synth.

You can almost hear the bandmates larking about, asking, "Will we get away with this?" They absolutely do — so much so that a second outing feels like an effervescent necessity.

Rob Leedham

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Sea Of Brass

_British Sea Power

Foliage-bothering indie heroes British Sea Power take their tuba-backed tour of the same name into the studio. *Decline Of...* era B-side *Heavenly Waters* gets an almost Morricone-esque twist, while 2013's *Machineries Of Joy* is augmented with brass stabs. One for completists rather than casual fans.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Mythologies

_Cheatahs

Consisting of four different nationalities, Cheatahs neatly reflect the melting pot of their adopted hometown of London — and their music is similarly cut 'n' paste. With hints of a more urgent My Bloody Valentine and hooks worthy of The Strokes, *Mythologies* is a fuzz-laden journey through their various influences.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

READ



THE PROMISE OF THE CHILD

The Promise Of The Child

_Tom Toner

Hard sci-fi is all about new worlds and huge, vertiginous ideas. Even so, it's rare to come across something as original as this debut novel, set 12,000 years from now.

Humanity has branched out, diversifying into different species, from 15-foot giants to elflike pygmies. Planets have been hollowed out and lit from inside with tiny

captive stars. And some 21st-century humans are still alive, kept going by lost medical tech. Many of them have gone mad, but a few fight for control of their dwindling empire.

It's a slightly disjointed read at times, but it will leave you with a myriad of interesting questions.

Will Dunn

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Crack99

_David Locke Hall

The true inside tale of a Chinese software pirate's takedown by US agents is made more zingy by the dodgy stuff in question being professional and/or military in nature (think software for controlling satellites, not *Flight Simulator X*). Despite the crisp writing, this is only for fans of real espionage and legal affairs.

Fraser Macdonald

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Star Wars: The Original Topps Trading Card Series, Volume One

_Gary Gerani

Star Wars collectables tend to be worth more than the catering budget of one of Jabba the Hutt's knees-ups. This anthology contains over 500 pages of the sought-after Topps cards and stickers. One for committed star-nerds.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

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SMARTER CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Buying presents for all the family can be time-consuming and expensive – but bespokeoffers.co.uk makes hunting out brilliant bargains easy

Christmas might be the most wonderful time of the year, but searching for hours for deals will sap the festive spirit right out of you. Beat My Price from [bespoke offers](http://bespokeoffers.co.uk) makes it easy to find great gifts at bargain prices. You could save up to 12%¹ by using Beat My Price when you've found a product you want on Amazon, John Lewis, Currys or another major retailer.

Beat My Price's works harder than Santa's elves to track down the biggest online bargains. We found the following deals: an

Apple iPad Air 2 16GB Wi-Fi for £289 (13% off), a Microsoft Wireless Display Adapter for £30 (saving 20%) and Philips hue lux Personal Wireless Lighting Starter Kit for £34 (saving 22%).²

If you've spotted a perfect gift on a high-street retailer's website and think it's a good deal, visit bespokeoffers.co.uk and challenge Beat My Price. If successful, you'll get an email within 48 hours.³ You will then have a limited time (usually 12 hours) to take advantage of the exclusive price. And that's it. It's Christmas shopping made easy.

HERE'S HOW BEAT MY PRICE WORKS...

1

COPY IT

Find the product you want at any major retailer on the web, highlight the URL and copy it

2

PASTE IT

Paste it into the search bar on the Beat My Price site. Hit the button and contain your excitement

3

BUY IT

We'll look for a better price and email you, usually within 24 hours, but it may take up to 48 hours

THREE INCREDIBLE BEAT MY PRICE OFFERS – AS FOUND BY REAL CUSTOMERS



SAMSUNG GALAXY S6 (£460)

OFFER PRICE: £368
DISCOUNT: 20%



SONOS PLAY:1 (£165)

OFFER PRICE: £142
DISCOUNT: 14%



GOOGLE CHROMECAST (£30)

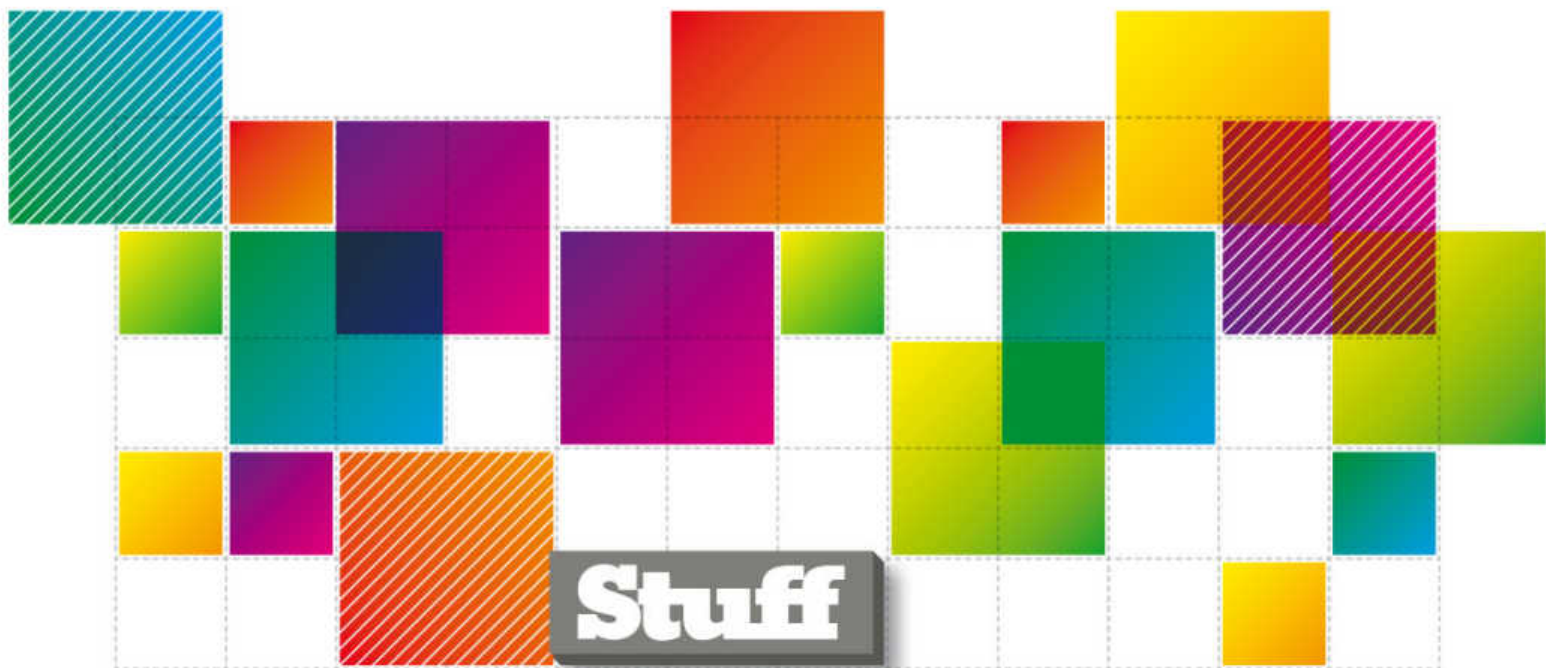
OFFER PRICE: £24
DISCOUNT: 20%

TRY BEAT MY PRICE AT: BESPOKEOFFERS.CO.UK

*PRICES, PRODUCTS AND AVAILABILITY CORRECT AT TIME OF PUBLICATION

T&Cs apply. ¹The 12% claim applies across all categories offered on Beat My Price. Registration is required. Beat My Price is owned and operated by Barclaycard, whose conditions apply.

²Three out of four times, Beat My Price finds a better price than the one found by the consumer. ³Personalised discount emailed to you within 48 hours; limited time period to use discount, usually 12 hours. Shoppers are currently able to make up to five requests a day on Beat My Price. Prices, products and availability correct at time of publication.



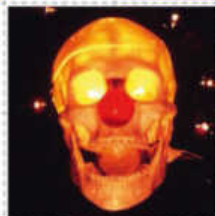
PROJECTS

MAKE. DO. UPGRADE.



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BETA YOURSELF:
MAKING
iOS APPS

Make that 'Airbnb for gerbils' idea come true at last



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PLAYLIST:
ALTERNATIVE
XMAS SONGS

Christmas time, misteloe and whine



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SUPER GEEK:
BOARD GAMES

Like video games, but made out of reality... and 'cool again', apparently



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INSTANT
UPGRADES:
COMMUTING

And if you must go to work tomorrow...



BETA
YOUR-
SELF

MAKING iOS APPS

Ready to make that must-download you've been thinking about for three years? Michael Simmons, founder of award-winning app Fantastical 2, will help you get started

THE BASICS

■ **Go analogue.** A pencil, paper and your imagination are the best combination for brainstorming ideas. There are also great tools such as Prott (prottapp.com) or proto.io for prototyping on a computer, but it's hard to beat the simplicity of a blank sheet of paper.

■ **Apples are sweetest.** All you need to get started in iOS development is a Mac. Coding doesn't take up much storage on a computer, but it's hard to beat the simplicity of a blank sheet of paper.



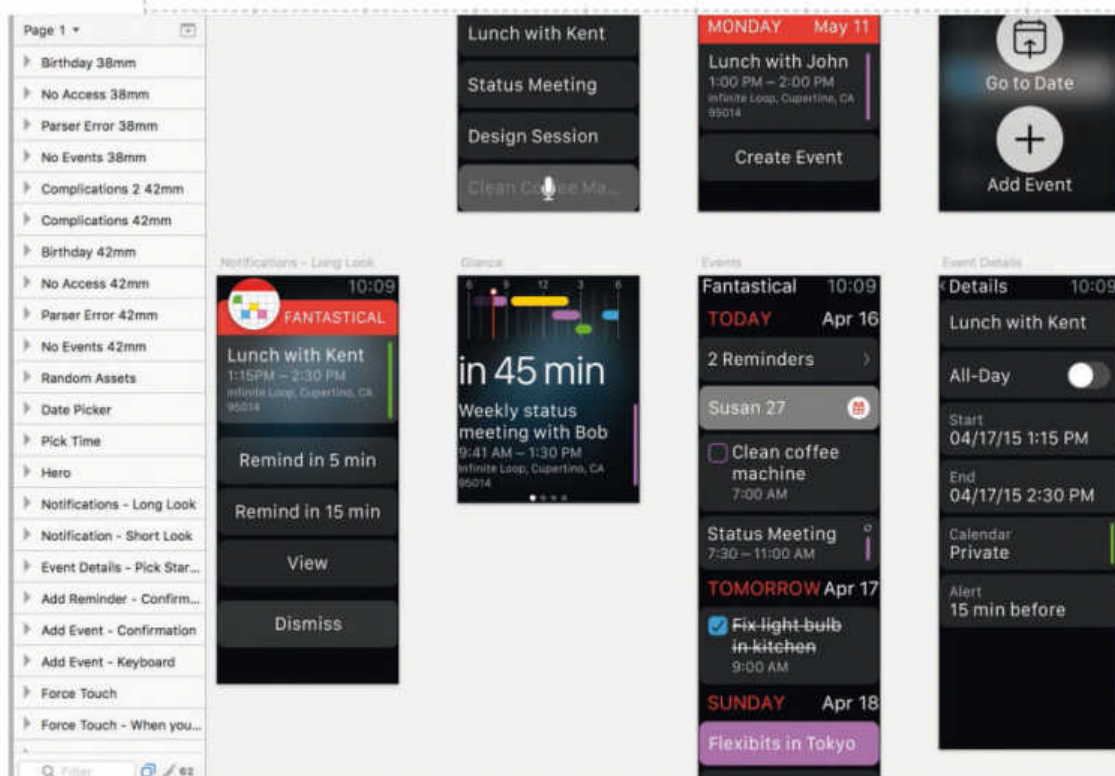
a Mac Mini or iMac will be fine. Check out Apple's refurb store for bargains.

■ **Choose the Xcode factor.** Use Apple's free development suite Xcode over other solutions that promise to let you run your app anywhere, such as Appcelerator or PhoneGap. It may seem more difficult at first, but it makes getting

help easier and will definitely pay off in the long run.

■ **Aim low.** When coming up with an app idea, think about a simple problem and how to solve it. You don't have to create something brand new, but you do have to be making something that interests you. It's the only way to push you through the learning obstacles.

■ **Don't call it Arkansas.** The app's name is very important. Make sure there are no pronunciation ambiguities and that you can easily tell someone its name. You don't want to be spelling it out every time someone asks.

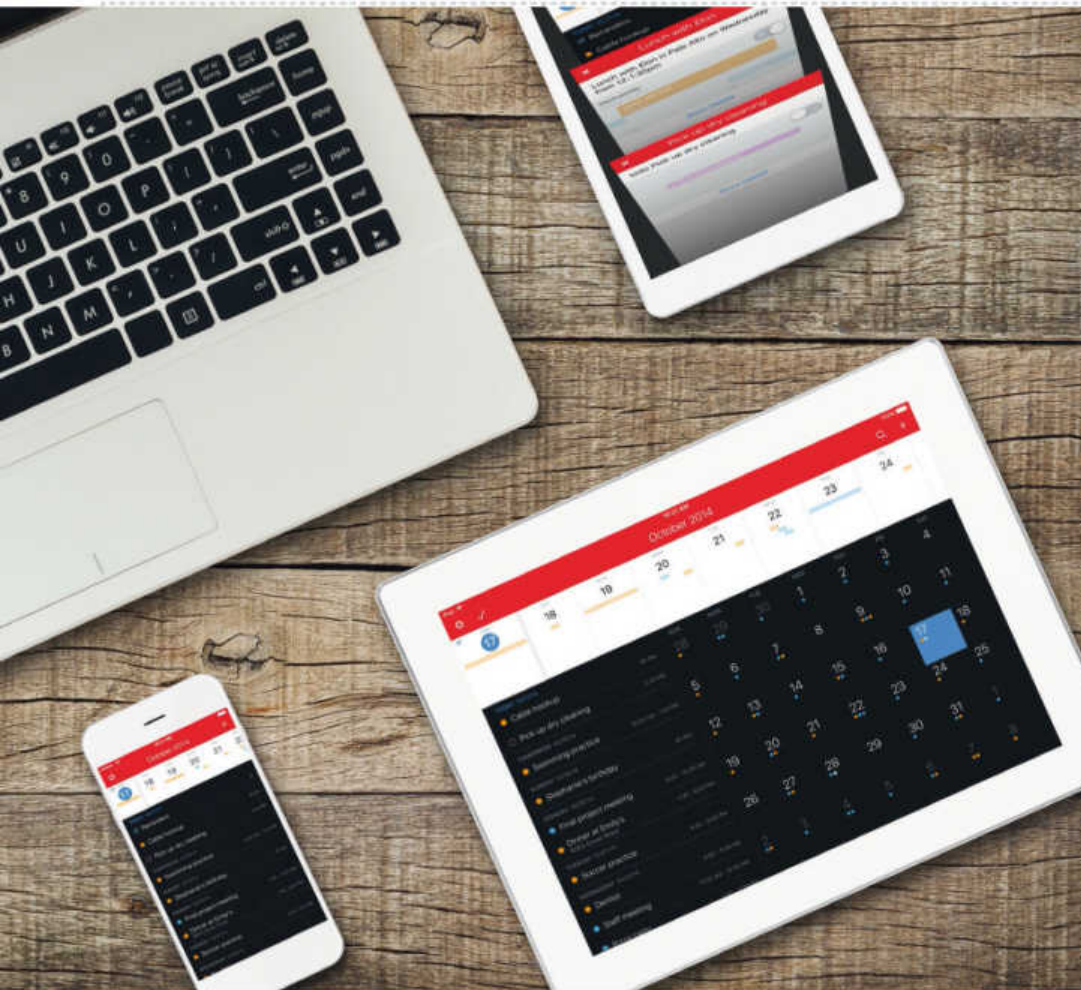


LEARN THE LINGO

■ **Be bilingual.** Apps can be written in two languages: Swift and Objective-C. Swift is newer, but most apps are still written in Objective-C. Learn a bit of both.

■ **Get stuck in.** If you're going the online course route, choose one that encourages you to build apps from the start – udemy.com and lynda.com both have excellent Swift courses.

■ **Nail the basics.** Programming skills apply everywhere. Learn the basic concepts well, as the knowledge will transfer to web design and Android development too.



LEVEL UP WITH...



STACK OVERFLOW

stackoverflow.com

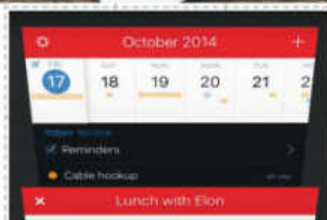
Developers of all types and levels of experience talk over their problems here, so it's a great place to go if you're in need of help. But be warned: it's not always newb-friendly, so make sure you check its library of over ten million programming questions to see if yours has been asked before.

dribbble

DRIBBBLE

dribbble.com

Whether you're looking for logo ideas or just fancy dunking your head in a stream of visual inspiration, this 'show and tell' site for designers should be top of your bookmarks list. There are special deals on design software and you can even filter projects by colour hex codes to see what combinations work for your app's colour scheme.



BUILDING BLOCKS

■ **Get structural.** Apps consist of the user interface, the pieces underneath that power the UI and the glue that holds these two together. The proper term for this is the model view controller (MVC).

■ **Say what?** In other words: the model stores the data, the view is what the user sees (the UI) and the controller updates the model based on input (like a new event in a calendar app).

■ **Step back.** Thinking about MVC as you design your app makes you aware of how it will all work together.

LOOK AND FEEL

■ **Learn from the master.** Look at Apple's own apps as a starting point for good design. Learn how it thinks apps should look and work, and apply those principles to your creation.

■ **Be inclusive.** People have different levels of eyesight. Think about providing the ability to adjust font sizes and offering different display themes.

■ **Experiment with colours.** There are no hard and fast rules about how many colours to use, but sites like UI Palette (uipalette.net) are good for finding combinations that work.

ROAD TESTING...

■ **Take a test ride.** Beta testing is essential for finding bugs and ironing out any kinks. Apple's free TestFlight is great for quick testing, but also has some limitations.

■ **Puck it up.** An alternative is HockeyApp (hockeyapp.net), which provides not only beta testing but also crash reporting, user feedback and analytics.

■ **Be a travelling salesman.** Always keep two versions of your app on your iPhone (one that works and one you're working on) so you can show people and get their feedback.

APP: THE HUMAN STORY

appdocumentary.com

It's not out until December, but this Kickstarter-funded documentary looks as if it could be the app equivalent of *Indie Game: The Movie*. A host of A-list developers have signed up to be involved and its website has a mix of video shorts and interesting stories written by people who have struck app gold.



PLAYLIST

ALTERNATIVE XMAS SONGS

Local supermarket already polluting your ears with Cliff's drippiest festive ditties? Bah, humbug. Strike back with *Stuff's* selection of mainstream-dodging seasonal gems

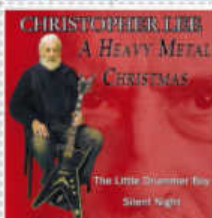
A Gun For Christmas The Vandals

Not content with just this one festive song, the Vandals went and recorded a whole punk rock Christmas album (*Oi To The World*), and it's completely brilliant. Go on, turn up your stereo and have a little mosh around the tree – just be careful not to pogo all over your presents.



Jesus Christ Big Star

This joyous, jangly ode to the big man himself would be at home on any happy-clappy Christian rock album. Instead, it sits incongruously in the middle of Big Star's *Third*, one of the bleakest records ever made. One suspects that the sentiments behind it might not be entirely sincere.



Silent Night Christopher Lee

This is possibly the loudest version of *Silent Night* you've ever heard, full of shredding guitars and topped with a wizard baritone. Legendary thespian Lee, who sadly died in June, came late to the metal scene – at 91 he became the oldest ever artist to make the Billboard singles chart with *Jingle Hell*.



Post Apocalypse Christmas Gruff Rhys

Imagine the horrors of *Fallout 3* set against a jaunty tune by him out of Super Furry Animals and you have this. "Deep inside the concrete bunker, post apocalypse bunker / We lick our wounds to kill the hunger, post apocalypse Christmas." More mulled wine, vicar?



I'll Be Killing You (This Christmas) Loudon Wainwright III

An anti-NRA protest song might not sound too twinkly, but this one's melody is irresistible. Inspired by a shooting in 2012, its mix of dark humour ("Santa's packing heat this Christmas") and sleigh bells mean it hits home without upsetting everyone.



Like Herod Mogwai

Admittedly the Yuletide elements of *Like Herod* begin and end with the title, but the poor chap always gets overlooked in carols. You'd think going around killing babies was somehow anti-festive. But he gets a look-in here courtesy of this classic 'quiet, quiet, quiet, OH SO LOUD' Mogwai track.

Christmas Was Better In The 80s The Futureheads

Just before the Futureheads went full 'a capella' and slid into obscurity, they donned their skinny ties and knocked out this blast of nostalgic post-punk – sure to spark an argument with your uncle about whether their cover of *Hounds Of Love* is better than the original.



**LISTEN TO THE STUFF PLAYLIST
HERE:** [BIT.LY/STUFFXMAS](https://bit.ly/stuffxmas)

SLADE SLAYERS HOW TO WRITE A CHRISTMAS SONG

The Song Lyrics Generator

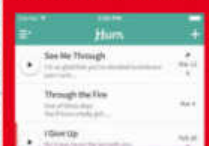
1 THE LYRICS

Everyone knows the classic Christmas song building blocks: mistletoe, chestnuts, zombie reindeer. But how to mould these overfamiliar staples into original lines? The Song Lyrics Generator will do the heavy lifting for you. songlyricsgenerator.com



2 THE SOUND

Once you have the trunk of your melodic tree in place, it's time to add sonic baubles. Freesound has hundreds of royalty-free sound effects, from sleigh bells to 'Santa falling down a chimney'. Add them to your loop library in Garageband. freesound.org



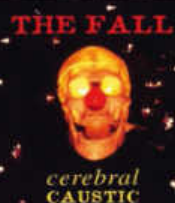
3 THE SONGBOOK

No more do your epic poetry and melodic gems need to be captured in separate apps. Hum lets you add notes and lyrics to your audio recordings, and filter your creations by key and tuning. **£1.49 / iOS**



Christmas In Hollis Run-DMC

When Run-DMC were asked to record a Christmas track for a Special Olympics benefit album in 1987, they initially refused, thinking it would wreck their street cred in one corny swoop. Instead, a sample of Clarence Carter's funky *Back Door Santa* provided us with an unusual seasonal classic.



Hark The Herald Angels Sing The Fall

Mark E Smith may be indie's answer to Ebenezer Scrooge, but when it comes to Christmas he's a big softie. The Fall have recorded several festive songs over the past 40 years, including a ragged take on *Jingle Bell Rock* and this, a merry gem with falsetto backing vocals.



Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence Ryuichi Sakamoto

Don't bother listening to any of the loungey pap he's done since, but Sakamoto's original theme for this deeply cheerless 1983 film has a haunting charm. The film stars David Bowie as a POW who's a bit of a rebel rebel, and Sakamoto himself as a camp commandant with issues.



Everything's Gonna Be Cool This Christmas Eels

Not all alternative Christmas songs are dark-hearted or wrapped in knowing irony. Mark 'E' Everett proves there's still a place for power-chord optimism with this fine bit of tinsel. Most importantly, it includes the lyric "Baby Jesus, born to rock".

SUPER
GEEK

BOARD GAMES

Board game addict Quentin Smith explains why the ancient art of table play isn't just coming back, it's blowing up – so now's the perfect time to get involved

Something amazing is happening. After decades of video games being 'the future', game designers the world over are coming back to the dining room table. Board games, card games and pen-and-paper roleplaying games aren't just cool again. Today's games are so good they make their 1980s ancestors look like junk.

There are a lot of reasons why. In an increasingly digital culture, the tactility of board games (like vinyl records) becomes a lot more attractive. The internet's also been vital,

letting people discover, buy and crowdfund niche games where previously their existence would never have been widely known. Most importantly, the games are just beautiful. In the late '90s, meticulously designed German games such as *Settlers Of Catan* reached a wider audience, and ever since then they've got better and better.

The only question is, what do you want to play? *The Resistance* (£20, amazon.co.uk) is a simple card game that casts you and your friends as members of an underground resistance unit,

where some players are government spies trying to get sent on missions to secretly sabotage them from within. You know someone on the team is a spy... but who?

If you're after something more traditional, *Ticket To Ride* (£30, daysofwonder.com) is an even simpler game based on developing a lovely train network, though it can quickly end up feeling like a *Bourne Identity* fistfight in an enclosed space. Any route you claim will prompt other players to scream in protest and swear revenge.

The best thing about the recent board game explosion is that there's now something for everyone, as you can see with the three modern classics below. It's not just that board games are really good fun either. Video games are fantastic, but if anything, our becoming so obsessed with them over the past 30 years has highlighted everything they can't yet do. The improved social dynamics and design space in using physical objects makes playing these games vital and exciting. We can, and should, have both.

JARGON BUSTER

■ EUROGAME

A style of conflict-averse game that originated in Germany, a eurogame is one that sees players competing without ever coming into contact.

■ AMERITRASH

Silly and thematically ambitious games of a style that was popular in 1980s America. If you're playing a space marine or a wizard or you're battling Cthulhu, it's Ameritrash.

■ ANALYSIS PARALYSIS

Crippling indecision that strikes players when playing complex board games. Not to be confused with tactical thinking, analysis paralysis often involves a frustrating absence of any thoughts whatsoever.

■ QUARTERBACKING

Much-maligned behaviour where a player will suggest what another should do on their turn, to the point of almost playing the game for them.



LORDS OF VEGAS

Cutthroat and hilarious, *Lords Of Vegas* is a game about making millions as a casino mogul in Las Vegas. Players invest money to turn their barren lots into glittering casinos, which pay out in awkward fits and starts. The thing is, unlike Monopoly's dull arc, which always feels like you're being slowly beaten to death by integers, *Lords Of Vegas* allows players to acquire other lots, merge casinos and then try to wrest control of the supercasino from others in unfathomably expensive gambles. Also, if you're ever bored (or shy of a couple of million bucks) you can play craps at your friends' tables.

£30 / gameslore.com

THE
MONOPOLY
CRUSHER

STAR WARS: ARMADA

Would you like to steer a gorgeous, pre-painted Star Destroyer around your table, scattering your friends' X-Wing squadrons with a barrage of turbolasers? Of course you would, and *Star Wars: Armada* is only too keen to help. This is a collectible miniatures game from the best publisher in the business, and in addition to being intensely desirable, it's a tense war game. The gigantic capital ships under your control draw slow curves across the board, while smaller ships cut a path between them and tiny, fragile fighters flit about like mayflies. Perfect for a lazy Sunday.

£60 / gameslore.com

THE
LUXURY
MODEL



THE
SEASONAL
CLASSIC



DEAD OF WINTER

Part of a popular genre of 'betrayal' board games, *Dead Of Winter* casts everybody as a group of survivors during a frozen zombie apocalypse, and only by working together and managing careful reserves of medicine, food and weaponry will you manage to survive. But there's a problem. Everyone has a secret objective too, and there's the very real possibility that one player's secret will be the failure of the colony. You can cast players into exile on a successful vote... but you'd better hope you're right, or you'll never make it through the long winter alive.

£45 / boardgameshop.eu

GET INSPIRED!



THE WEBSITE BOARDGAMEGEEK

With 65,000 games and counting, BoardGameGeek is a comprehensive database of every title ever made. Its ageing design can be tricky to navigate, but do persevere. The forums contain the answer to every question you will ever ask, and the 'Hotness' sidebar is worth keeping an eye on. boardgamegeek.com



THE SHOW GENCON

America's largest and best board game convention can be found in Indianapolis every August, and it's absolutely worth the pilgrimage. It's a friendly convention in one of the most hospitable cities in America. Wander the halls, play anything you like, and come home with as many games as you can stagger under. gencon.com



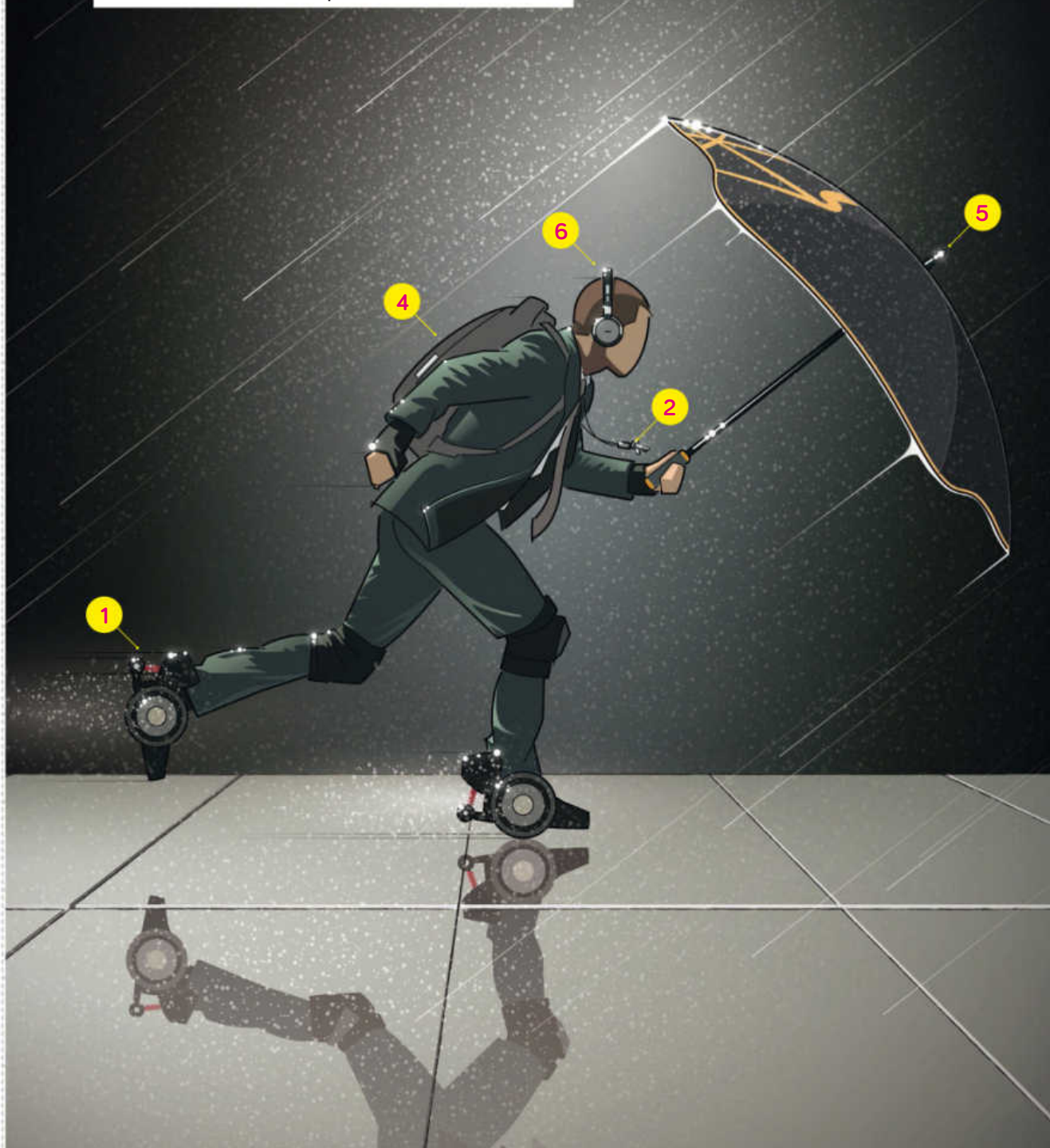
THE PODCAST SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN

This funny and heartfelt resource for anybody who loves to play has regular reviews, videos and an excellent monthly podcast (starring Quintin Smith and friends). Founded four years ago to teach people about board games, the site now focuses on keeping the hobby accessible and welcoming to newcomers. shutupandsitdown.com

6 INSTANT UPGRADES

COMMUTING

While you await the invention of teleportation, turn your morning trudge into a dance down Gadget Lane with these far-from-pedestrian winter wonders



[Words: Kate Solomon Illustration: Jamie Sneddon]



1 ROCKETSKATES R-10

To really avoid your fellow commuters, you need to skip public transport altogether. But propelling yourself workwards using just your legs can be a drag, particularly if you've got several miles of inner city to cover. Save on the effort with this pair of motorised skates. After 90 minutes they'll need a recharge, so bear that in mind if work is a few miles away. Marginally cooler than a Segway, they top out at 12mph and work in a similar way by tilting forwards to accelerate and backwards to brake.

£545 / robotshop.com



2 NATIVE UNION KEY CABLE

There's an ad for hilariously expensive watches that says you never truly own one; you just look after it for the next generation. The same is true of charging cables: you just hold on to one until someone needs to borrow it, and then it's gone. This discreet little cable, however, is attached to your keys – so you'll hold on to it. Its natty knot form is discreet enough to slip in a pocket, but long enough to plug your phone into a USB port and still play *Horizon Chase* while it charges.

£25 / nativeunion.co.uk



3 HERE ACTIVE LISTENING

Maybe you don't hate humanity enough to filter other folk out of your hearing altogether – in which case, these non-musical earphones could be for you. Coupled with an iOS or Android app, these wireless in-ear buds essentially let you apply a volume knob and EQ to real life. You can turn down the sound of a baby crying on the train, boost the bass in the club or even 'Instagram your ears' by applying one of the pre-set filters to your commute. Who needs music?

\$250 / hereplus.me



4 RIUTBAG

The Artful Dodger may have been shipped off to Australia but that doesn't mean opportunist pickpockets aren't looking to relieve you of your valuables every step of your commute. By putting all the zips on the part of the rucksack that rests against your back, the makers of RiutBag reckon your phones, tablets, laptops, wallets and other valuables will be safe as houses in transit. It's the sort of idea that would have attracted a blizzard of *Dragons' Den* cash if it hadn't already been funded on Kickstarter.

from £80 / riut.co.uk



5 BLUNT XS METRO

It's the classic get-to-work mishap: you set out on a rainy, windy day, your sharp-spoked umbrella whipping back and forth in the breeze, and when you arrive and fold your umbrella up you find a fellow commuter's eyeball embedded on one spoke. Oops! A Blunt umbrella saves you from such embarrassment: its spokes are softened by extra supports, which also keep its high-tension canopy under control in the wind. An extra £15 buys you a Bluetooth tile so you can find it with your phone.

£60 (with tile) / bluntumbrellas.com



6 PHILIPS NC1

Sometimes you're just not in the mood to get stuck talking to a colleague or suffer the sniffles and sneezes of your fellow passengers as you try to make it to work without going full *Office Space*. So shut out all the sounds of the underground with this fine pair of noise-cancellers. The NC1s use four microphones to filter out all outside noise, and don't sacrifice sound quality for the privilege. The headphones also fold up nice and small so they won't take up too much room in your new thiefproof backpack.

£250 / philips.co.uk

TALKIES IN TRANSIT: COMMUTE-CASTS



MYSTERY SHOW

Serial fans awaiting the new season should check out this solver of un-Googleable riddles. Presenter Starlee Kine tackles small, everyday mysteries, like why did a local video shop vanish overnight?



PILOTS

Transatlantic penpals Elizabeth Sankey and Anne Donahue hook up on Skype to break down the first episodes of classic shows such as *Friends*, *The Office* and *The Wire*. It's like having two mates chat with you all the way to work.



SONG EXPLORER

This podcast asks artists to take their songs apart to explain just what it all means. Featuring diverse acts from Joey Bada\$\$ to The National, there's something for everyone in the 50-episode back catalogue.



REGULAR FEATURES

Four intrepid young-ish men embark on a quest to find a feature worth doing more than once. As a result every show is different, from baiting racists to deep analysis of a sitcom script that one of them wrote when he was 16.

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MAIL OF THE MONTH

Q SPICY SOURCES

My wife and I are moving house, so we're taking the opportunity to rationalise the AV rig. I'd been thinking of replacing the 5.1 system with a wall-mounted soundbar and wireless sub, but that still leaves the issue of how to connect the four HDMI sources

to the TV. Is there a way of connecting my AV receiver, or the HDMI sources themselves, to the TV wirelessly?

Ian Jeffreys

A Cables are a necessary evil for now, but you can fight back. IOGear's Wireless HD Streaming hub is pricey at

£300 (amazon.co.uk), but it has received solid reviews. It can stream three HDMI sources to your TV without noticeable quality loss or lag. The TV receiver can be powered by USB, so that's one less plug socket to worry about. If you need four sources, add a cheap HDMI splitter.

Speak your brains to *Stuff* and you could win a six-month **TIDAL HIFI SUBSCRIPTION**. This letter wins six months of high-fidelity music and video streaming from TIDAL, worth £20/month



Q IT AIN'T HALF HOT, MUM

Hi *Stuff*. My mum wants to get a new camera to replace her Canon 450D. She does lots of sports photography so she needs something fast and snappy, but she can't choose between a CSC or an SLR – any recommendations? She's got a bunch of Canon lenses already, if that helps, and anything less than £1000 would be great if at all possible!

Ken Pytheman

A Hi Ken. If yo mamma already has the lenses then it makes more sense to stick with another Canon DSLR. Not only will she feel right at home, but it will save a lot of

money – good lenses aren't cheap. The Canon EOS 70D (£700, body only) is a fine camera and we recommend it. It has 19 cross-type autofocus points, and its ability to take seven 20MP shots per second (at up to 1/8000 speed) should produce crisp, clear photos of balls, bats, racquets and anything else the sports world throws her way.

Q BLACKBERRIES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT

I seem to be the last person on earth using a BlackBerry! I have the Q10 and rather like it. I've had BlackBerrys since before they were even trendy – I bemoan the lack of apps but that's all. I would like to change to iOS or Android, but I need a versatile word substitution ability. I need it because I do a lot of repetitive quotes and bids and offers: I have 75 different 'macro' texts that I use regularly. Can you suggest a smartphone or an app with this feature?

Michael Oppenheimer

A BlackBerrys were trendy? No problem, Michael. Both

Android devices and iPhones have this feature built in, so there's no need to mess around with installing separate apps, which is a big plus. We'd recommend an iPhone for the most hassle-free implementation, though, as Android's shortcut settings have a character limit and are generally more picky. Once you've unwrapped your shiny new iPhone, just hit up the keyboard settings and tap Shortcuts, and you'll be good to go.

Q WIRY ATHLETE

Hi *Stuff*. I go to the gym quite a lot and I'm getting really fed up with my headphone cables getting in the way when I'm running and lifting. I'd love a pair of Bluetooth headphones to cut the cord, but I really don't want to spend much. Ideally they'd also sound good too, though I realise you often get what you pay for!

Maciej Reynolds

A Hi Maciej. Don't worry, it is possible to get something decent without

decimating your bank account. The Mpow Swift wireless headphones (£15, amazon.co.uk) won't break the bank, but they still pack in aptX for superior streaming quality. They're designed to stay in your ears when you're running, and have playback and volume controls built in, so you won't need to mess around with your phone while you're exercising.



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DO YOU KNOW WHAT AN E-CIGARETTE LOOKS LIKE?



If you think “yes”, the real answer is possibly “no”, because if you think they look like a conventional cigarette, game changing technology comes in slightly bigger packages nowadays.

The very latest devices allow voltage, wattage, and now even temperature control. Variable temperature (VT) devices directly control the coil temperature, rapidly heating it to a user selected temperature and holding it close to that temperature for the best vaping experience.

The Totally Wicked Forza VT60 is just one of our latest Variable Temperature devices. The screen and controls can do a lot, but are intuitive to use. It can be charged (and firmware upgraded) via its micro-USB port, but its 18650 battery can also be removed for charging or replacement. It is just as suitable for a technologically “savvy” new user as it is for a seasoned vaper. If it doesn't look like an e-cigarette to you yet, don't worry. It will.

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5-MINUTE HACKS

IF NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST...



1 MAKE A MINIATURE PLANET

It's never been easier to turn your panoramas into little marble-like worlds that probably already exist in some strange parallel universe (we like to think). Here's how to make one...

...on your iPhone. The excellent Circular+ (£1.49, iOS) not only helps you make 'little planets' thanks to effects like lens flares; it also does an invert effect for psychedelic album covers.

...on your Android phone. Spherify (£free, Android) takes your existing panoramas and crunches them into small worlds, before serving up a gallery of your physics-defying creations.

...on your computer. A bit trickier, but using GIMP (£free, gimp.org) import your 360° panorama, stretch it into a perfect square, rotate 180° and apply 'Polar Coords' in the filters menu.

2 BECOME INSTANTLY MULTILINGUAL

If all you can remember from GCSE German is the translation for Black Forest gâteau, fear not – Windows 10's new Skype update is here to make you fluent in seven different languages:

On your Windows 10 machine, log into Skype. Now choose your contact, before selecting their language from the drop-down menu.

Check that the globe icon next to the settings wheel is highlighted. This shows that Skype Translator is on. Now start your video chat by clicking on the camera icon.

Using a headset will help Skype to give you the most accurate near-instant translations. As you speak, you'll get a translation in your headphones and on screen. Hello, real-world Babel fish.



3 MAKE A GIF-VITATION

It's your party, and you can invite people via a GIF of robots falling over if you want to. Here's the faster alternative to laboriously drafting a witty invite email:

Download FLYR (£free, iOS). Search for your party's theme in the lower box. This is a front-end client for Giphy.com, which is basically the Amazon of amusing (and free) GIFs.

If you want to import your own photo or video, press the camera icon. Once you've confirmed the background, add your event's name, date and location.

Now tap the paper aeroplane symbol and send it out over Instagram, text or WhatsApp. Disclaimer: *Stuff* hasn't confirmed a roboparty for 2029 in Detroit, but we're not ruling it out either.



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 For full reviews of every product in the top 10s, visit stuff.tv/reviews

HOT BUY 1		Samsung Galaxy S6 This is a new era for Samsung, with a smart upgrade that fixes not just things that were amiss in the Galaxy S5, but things that have plagued them for years. No plastic here: its front and back are super-tough Gorilla Glass 4, its sides aluminium. In terms of ergonomics and speaker quality, HTC still wins, but only just. And in the more important areas of camera performance, screen tech and raw power, the Galaxy S6 tramples its rival. We just wish it had a microSD slot.	STUFF SAYS Samsung has proven its critics wrong – the Galaxy S6 is the new benchmark for flagship phones from £380 ★★★★★
2		Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ The Edge+ is a larger version of the curvy S6 Edge that wowed us earlier this year; its extra chunk of screen and camera are terrific, while it's also technologically superior to almost everything out there. For a money-no-object phone, it's an absolute corker.	from £470 ★★★★★
3		LG G4 The leather-clad LG G4 is a treat for those who want something that looks and feels a bit different. Its camera is incredibly powerful, giving you almost as much control as a DSLR, and the large screen is brilliant... but the battery life holds it back from the top.	£320 ★★★★★
NEW 4		Apple iPhone 6s "Everything's changed" is pushing it, but within the 6s's familiar body lies a surprising amount of innovation. You'll really notice the A9 processor's added speed, the 12MP camera's scope and quality, and of course, the time-saving delight that is 3D Touch.	from £540 ★★★★★
5		OnePlus 2 The second OnePlus phone massively undercuts the big names with performance, software and battery life that far exceed some of the £500-odd competition. The only thing that might put you off is simply how much of a pain the OnePlus 2 is to get hold of.	£255 ★★★★★
6		HTC One M9+ Having been beaten by the S6, the M9+ is the step forward that perhaps the M9 should have been. With a bigger, more pixel-packed screen and a fingerprint scanner it's welcome at the next-gen superphone party, and it's dressed just as smartly as before.	£330 ★★★★★
7		Vodafone Smart Prime 6 Want the biggest, sharpest display for under £100? This 5in 720p screen wouldn't look out of place in a phone twice the price. If you like gaming or want to watch videos on the move, this is a real bargain – as long as you don't mind being locked to Vodafone.	from £70 ★★★★★
NEW 8		Sony Xperia Z5 Do a higher-megapixel camera and neat fingerprint scanner revitalise this Sony? Nearly but not quite. This is a very good and attractive phone, but its price seems steep when it has no killer feature to offer over other Android kings.	£550 ★★★★★☆
NEW 9		Apple iPhone 6s Plus The iPhone 6s Plus provides an expansive, immersive experience thanks to its giant screen. But many will find it too cumbersome, which defeats the purpose of those brilliant OIS and Live Photos camera features, and the 6s is clearly the faster phone.	from £620 ★★★★★☆
NEW 10		Motorola Moto G (2015) The third-gen model takes everything we loved about the previous Moto Gs, sidesteps the performance issues and adds in a great camera and waterproofing to finish off the package. However, the price hike means it's not quite as bargain as before.	£160 ★★★★★☆

● Prices quoted are for handset only unless otherwise stated

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HOT BUY 1		Apple iPad Air 2 The iPad Air didn't really need to be thinner, but that doesn't mean 6.1mm isn't mighty impressive. This combines with reassuring weight and impeccable build quality to make this the most desirable tab on the planet. While the display is the same Retina resolution as before, clever screen tech brings the pixels closer to the surface, and the whole experience is even faster than before thanks to the new A8X chip. Basically it's the best tablet in the world made even better.	STUFF SAYS Thinner, lighter and mightier: Apple's iron-fisted reign at the top of the tablet charts continues unabated from £400 ★★★★★
NEW 2		Apple iPad Mini 4 This is the mini tab we've been waiting for. It's 1.4mm thinner and 32g lighter, just the right size for a great portable entertainment hub, and subtle display tweaks will do justice to games and graphic novels alike. Plus it will easily last three days on a charge.	from £320 ★★★★★
3		Sony Xperia Z4 Tablet Sony have added a keyboard to this already stunning tab, so now it's handy for work as well as play, just like a Windows hybrid. Superb battery life, plenty of power, a slim body and super-vivid screen make this the best Android alternative to an iPad Air 2.	£500 (with keyboard) ★★★★★
NEW 4		Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7 Slimmer and faster, with a brilliant screen and serious stamina, the Galaxy Tab S2 sees Samsung back in the running for the Android throne. The Xperia Z4 just pips it with its bundled keyboard, but the S2's a versatile, big-screen tab first and foremost.	£350 ★★★★★
5		Tesco Hudl 2 At this price, the Hudl 2 has far more tech rammed into its 9.85mm-thick body than you'd ever expect. It has a Full HD screen, and its 273ppi display offers the sharpest of images. This is a jaw-dropping bargain, as long as you can put up with Tesco bloat.	£100 ★★★★★
6		Microsoft Surface Pro 3 At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from £550 ★★★★★
7		Asus Transformer Book T100 Chi While it may sit in the middle of 10in hybrid range on price, the Transformer Book T100 Chi is classier than the average tablet. Improvements to design, screen and keyboard quality make it a neat choice if you don't mind working with a small screen.	£300 ★★★★★
8		Google Nexus 9 The design isn't as pristine, but this is a real Android contender to rival the iPads. You get the new Android 6.0 Marshmallow software, bags of power and a super-sharp display. With 12 hours of video play and two front-facing speakers, it'll be a great film buddy.	£210 ★★★★★☆
9		Sony Xperia Z3 Tablet Compact A slim, light and reliable couch or commute companion, with a screen that looks brilliant despite being 'only' Full HD. The waterproofing may sway people away from choosing an iPad Mini and every gamer's eyes will light up at the mention of PS4 Remote Play.	£270 ★★★★★☆
10		Microsoft Surface 3 Microsoft finally nailed the hybrid formula with the Surface Pro 3, and now it's translated it to this: a smart, ultra-portable design with the benefits of full Windows 8.1. It's easily the best affordable Surface yet. Just make sure you buy the keyboard.	£420 ★★★★★☆

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HOT BUY	1		Sonos multiroom system Who needs to drill holes and replaster walls to get a multiroom music system? Not you. With the addition of the cracking little Play:1 (£165) Sonos has made it easier than ever to start spreading your tunes around. Then maybe hook up a Connect to your existing hi-fi and router, and add speakers to a Connect:Amp in another room, or a SUB for a bass boost. You'll run out of rooms before you run out of options. For a further upgrade, the Arcam rSeries SonLink DAC works a treat with the Connect.	STUFF SAYS Infinite music in every room without the need for custom installers? Sign us up now, please from £165 ★★★★★	
	2		Naim Mu-so How much for a wireless speaker?! Well yes, but what a wireless speaker it is. Naim has ploughed all of its high-end hi-fi experience into delivering a beautifully made, great-sounding device with AirPlay, Spotify Connect and aptX Bluetooth all on board.	£895 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ONE-BOX WI-FI HI-FI
NEW	3		KEF Muo The KEF Muo sounds as good as it looks, which is very nice indeed. It may be the size of a beer can, but it creates a room-filling sound, brilliantly balanced and packed with vim and vigour. The Muo has the audio solidity of the B&W T7, but with even greater detail.	£300 ★★★★★	
NEW	4		Google Chromecast Audio The original Chromecast was a very bright idea: a device to stream TV directly from the internet. Chromecast Audio has arrived to do the same to your hi-fi. It's smart and highly affordable, and makes a huge variety of apps such as Spotify and Deezer more fun to use.	£30 ★★★★★	
	5		Bowers & Wilkins T7 The T7 is B&W's first attempt at a portable Bluetooth speaker, and its good looks and real hi-fi sound combine to make it a real winner. It's solid and easy to use, and has an attractive honeycomb structure that helps reduce cabinet vibrations.	£300 ★★★★★	
	6		Monitor Audio Airstream S200 It may look a bit like a floppy skyscraper, but the Monitor Audio's Bluetooth-plus-AirPlay speaker makes a lot of sense, mostly because it takes up very little shelf/desk/table space but makes loads of lovely noise. It's a bit of a steal at this price.	£200 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PICNIC PARTIES
	7		Cambridge Audio Go There are loads of very cheap Bluetooth speakers out there, but we reckon it's worth spending that little bit more to get something that's really good – and that's the Go. It sounds awesome, it's really nicely built and its battery lasts a massive 18 hours.	£120 ★★★★★	
	8		Bluesound multiroom system Fancy a bit of Sonos-style multiroom but with better-than-CD-quality sound thrown in? You want Bluesound. There are all-in-one speakers, adapters for your existing hi-fi, and a Vault that rips and stores all your CDs. All can handle high-resolution audio.	from £270 ★★★★★	
	9		Cambridge Audio Minx Xi It might not look all that fancy, but the Minx Xi is like that micro system you had at uni, only it gobbles internet music rather than Rage Against The Machine CDs. Just add a pair of quality speakers (try Wharfedale Diamond 220s) and you've got a great hi-fi.	£500 ★★★★★	
	10		Q Acoustics BT3 These ultra-versatile Bluetooth speakers have an optical input for waking up the audio of your flatscreen TV. The styling is simple and so is the sound – brilliantly so, with perfect hi-fi balance and an impressive focus to the stereo image.	£280 ★★★★★	

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*On Sonos Play:1 Wireless Network Music Player (Black). Prices, products and availability correct at time of publication.



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HOT BUY 1		AKG K451 They've actually been around a little while now, but what put the K451 on-ears back on to our radar was an official price drop from £130 to £80, and a real-world price of just £50 or less. For that money they're unbeatable – awesomely agile and punchy sound wrapped up in a subtly stylish and foldable design. Add both standard and three-button control cables for maximising compatibility and there's practically no excuse for not getting brilliant sound from your phone.	STUFF SAYS Fantastic sound and great portability at an almost unbeatable price: the perfect phone upgrade £40 ★★★★★	
2		Bowers & Wilkins P5 Series 2 Even the most demanding audio buff would find it hard to fault these – B&W have delivered a pair of premium on-ears that look, feel and sound exquisite. You control playback and volume with your iPhone, while feeling like a VIP guest at an intimate gig.	£200 ★★★★★	
3		Philips Fidelio M1 MkII Your commute deserves a quality soundtrack, and second-generation Fidelio M1 headphones give you precisely that. There's oodles of detail to the sound and they punch harder than the Hulk. Beats and their ilk can't touch them.	£135 ★★★★★	
4		SoundMagic E10S This is actually the third version of SoundMagic's awesome, affordable in-ears – not that you'd tell by looking. They sound even better, though: a little smoother and more refined, with tight, weighty bass. Plus there's now a mic and button for smartphone use.	£40 ★★★★★	
5		Sony MDR-EX650AP If you're prepared to pay a little extra for your in-ears, these Sonys are even better than the SoundMagics above. The sound is that bit bigger, a little more detailed and a little more grown-up, and if you don't like the brass finish there's a silver version.	£40 ★★★★★	
6		Bose QuietComfort 25 The best kind of silence is the kind you then fill with sweet, sweet music, and that's what the QuietComfort 25s give you. The active noise-cancelling quells office hubbub, air-conditioning and aeroplane hum, and delivers cracking sound in its place.	£180 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SHUTTING OUT THE WORLD
7		Soul Electronics Flex These simple in-ears are brilliant for workouts, as they stay put thanks to the comfortable and unobtrusive ear-hooks. Sound quality is excellent, with crisp treble notes, clean vocals and even a decent amount of bass for the money.	£50 ★★★★★	
8		Philips Fidelio M2BT Building on the award-winning M1BT, Philips has added NFC for its new Bluetooth headphones and swapped the dark blue design for an understated black finish. The smart built-in controls and rich sound performance remain.	£165 ★★★★★	BEST FOR GREAT SOUND WITH NO WIRES
9		AKG Y50 The bright colour options (they're available in yellow, teal and red, as well as black) and massive logo have a slight try-hard feel about them, but the Y50s make up for it by sounding loads better than the more 'street' on-ear headphones out there.	£50 ★★★★★	
10		Sennheiser Momentum Classically styled, cushion-comfortable and smooth-sounding, the Momentums are the perfect over-ears for the dapper man about town. There's also an on-ear version, smaller and barely half the price, available in pink, blue, green, brown and, um, 'ivory'.	£160 ★★★★★	

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Dave from
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HOT BUY 1 	Sky+HD The new Sky boxes come with built-in Wi-Fi, to make it easier to access on-demand programming, of which there's now more than ever, including pre-release blockbuster films. There's also a 2TB drive available that, with more than 65 channels of HD, might well be worth the outlay. On the move, the Sky Go app is supremely slick. But the most important thing is this: Sky has more movie, TV and sport content – and more of it is unique – than any other service.	STUFF SAYS The only choice for serious TV, movie or sport addicts from £free + £20/month ★★★★★
2 	Roku 2 Roku's new mid-range offering is the most compelling yet. It is essentially identical to the Roku 3, just without the smart remote. With a customisable feed, Netflix, Now TV, Google Play, YouTube and all the UK catch-up services, it's unbiased, slick and simple.	£60 ★★★★★
3 	Sony BDV-N5200 A whole (home) cinema (minus a telly) in one box? That's the Sony BDV-N5200. A Netflix-toting Blu-ray player, an amplifier, five speakers and a subwoofer, all for a lot less than an iPhone 6. There's even a wireless adapter for the rear speakers.	£370 ★★★★★
4 	Sonos Playbar A characteristically Sonos take on the soundbar, the Playbar hooks up to your TV via its single optical input and fills your room with a big, detailed sound. And as with all Sonos kit, it can stream your own music files, Spotify and more as part of a multiroom system..	£550 ★★★★★ BEST FOR STREAMING MUSIC
5 	Sony BDP-S7200 Sure, you can pick up a Blu-ray player for just £50 these days, but if you're serious about your movies then you want to make sure they look and sound crisper than a Kettle Chip. That's where the S7200 comes in. It even throws Netflix and iPlayer into the bargain.	£175 ★★★★★
6 	Yamaha YSP-2500 If your only requirement for a soundbar is that it should sound better than your telly, almost any will do; but if you want one that will fool your ears into thinking they're surrounded by actual speakers, you want the amazingly clever Yamaha YSP-2500.	£540 ★★★★★
7 	Virgin TiVo Hardware-wise, the taste-learning TiVo is a Sky+HD-beater, but it loses out on content. Mind you, subscribers to the 'XL' package now have free access to all the BT Sport channels: Premier League football, MotoGP and more, in lovely HD.	from £free + £22/month ★★★★★
8 	BenQ W1400 What's better than <i>Inception</i> ? <i>Inception</i> on a 300in screen, that's what. How do you get a 300in screen in your house? You buy the BenQ W1400. If your lounge isn't that big it can also project an 84in image from just 2m away. Try finding an 84in TV for this price.	£900 ★★★★★
9 	Humax DTR-T2000 Building on the success of the DTR-T1010, Humax has treated us with a more refined version of their suscription-free YouView box. This faster and more compact device has a huge variety of catch-up offerings for your sofa-time, but there's still no sign of Wi-Fi.	£190 ★★★★★
UPDATE 10 	Google Chromecast The new Chromecast lets you search multiple streaming services from one app, offers better Wi-Fi and lets you use your phone to control Android games. For the seriously impatient, its smart preloading also loads Netflix episodes almost instantaneously.	£30 ★★★★★

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HOT BUY	1		LG 55EG960V We knew that one day OLED and 4K would be joined in holy matrimony, and that the results would be rather special. That day is now upon us and 'special' doesn't quite do it justice. This 55in LG is the new pinnacle of TV tech and performance, combining the unbelievable colours, contrast and brightness of OLED with the super-sharp, ultra-detailed images of 4K to create a picture that's more real and enticing than looking out of the window.	STUFF SAYS It's mighty pricey, but if you're after the finest flatscreen known to man, this is currently it £3000 ★★★★★	
	2		LG 55EC930V Not everyone's got £4000 to blow on a flatscreen, and if you have to choose between OLED and 4K it's OLED we'd take right now. The awesome colours, super-deep blacks and amazing contrast will make everything you already watch look extra-amazing.	from £1650 ★★★★★	
NEW	3		Samsung UE48JU7000 This 48in display is a crowd-pleaser, with great performance, good looks, web-based smarts and plenty of connections. Picture quality is stunning – super-sharp and clear in 4K, and brilliantly upscaled in 1080p. There's also a slick multitasking interface.	£1200 ★★★★★	
	4		Panasonic TX-50CX802B After losing ground to other makers last year, can Panasonic's new flagships win big? Sporting a new 'Super Bright' LED panel and attractive Firefox-powered interface with customisable pop-up menus, this telly is intuitive and offers strong 4K performance.	£1400 ★★★★★	
NEW	5		Sony KD-75X9405C This is 75 inches of holy cow: the sort of thrilling picture that lets you see exactly how much hair gel Paul Hollywood uses, although the default setting is so bright you'll squint like Clint Eastwood. And those proper speakers at the sides make a real difference.	£6000 ★★★★★	
	6		Samsung UE55JS8500 Each of its 8.3million pixels is put to good use, filling the screen's handsome real estate with pin-sharp outlines, potent contrast and eye-popping colours. Sound-wise, it's way more powerful than bog-standard flatscreens. Worth the pretty penny? Oh yes.	£1600 ★★★★★	
	7		Panasonic TX-40CS520 Giant TVs aren't for every living room. Thankfully, you can still get hold of 40in screens, and the TX-40CS520 is testament to just how good an affordable TV can be. There's no 4K or 3D, but with smart features, apps and built-in Wi-Fi, this is an absolute steal.	£380 ★★★★★	BEST FOR A SMALLER SCREEN
	8		Samsung UE48J6300 The pronounced curve on this Samsung is the first thing you'll notice, as the picture may look a touch skewed from some angles; but if you're viewing from the centre it's totally immersive, and for a big TV on a budget, the picture quality is superb.	£500 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR AFFORDABLE CURVINESS
NEW	9		John Lewis 55JL9100 Don't be confused – LG made a TV and John Lewis has slapped its logo all over it. This is an option for those who want a big 4K screen without paying big 4K prices. You will compromise on detailed video performance, but you'll still get LG's intuitive software.	£900 ★★★★☆	
NEW	10		LG 65UF850V Want a huge TV that could still just about fit under the roof and won't require you to take out a second mortgage? This 65-incher fits the bill. It doesn't have tip-top specs but does have LG's superb WebOS 2.0 channel-to-app bouncing interface.	£1750 ★★★★☆	

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HOT BUY 1		Apple MacBook Pro 13in (2015) Apple hasn't changed too many parts of the MacBook Pro for 2015. There's a fancy new trackpad and the latest generation of Intel CPUs, which deliver better stamina as well as a chunk more power. This is an incremental upgrade, but given how good the Pro already was, that's more than enough to keep it right at the top of the laptop honours list. If you need power as well as stamina and portability, this is one of the best laptops money can buy.	STUFF SAYS If it ain't broke... it hasn't radically changed, but the Pro's performance and trackpad are top of its class from £1000 ★★★★★	
2		Asus ZenBook UX305 Asus knows what it's doing. It knows that the Apple MacBook Air laptops are treading water and the ZenBook UX305 is pretty much everything the 2015 Air should have been, with its fetching aluminium design and as good a display as any £1000 laptop.	from £640 ★★★★★	
3		Microsoft Surface Pro 3 The fact that it's the only device to feature in two of our Top Tens is a testament to the Surface Pro's versatility: it's a strong tablet, but its full-fat operating system and powerful innards mean it's also a worthy adversary to Ultrabooks and MacBooks.	from £660 (with Type Cover) ★★★★★	BEST FOR WORKING ANYWHERE
4		Asus ROG G751 The G751 is for the loud and proud PC gamer. While its design is rather brash, the awesome performance, good screen and highly effective fans that keep it pretty quiet under pressure make this one of the best gaming laptops around.	£1100 ★★★★★	
5		Apple MacBook (2015) This is no 'Air', nor 'Pro': a clear sign that this is what Apple sees as the future of the ultraportable laptop. And it's certainly very desirable: a 12in lean machine with a superb screen and haptic touchpad. The lack of ports can be frustrating, though.	from £1050 ★★★★★	
6		Aorus X3 v3 This high-end gaming PC is packed into one of the smallest chassis we've ever seen, complete with a drool-worthy Ultra-HD screen, good sound quality and all the storage you'll ever need. It is pretty pricey, but it will keep you at the top of your game.	£1280 ★★★★★	
7		Toshiba Chromebook 2 Toshiba has created the most desirable Chromebook to date with some well-judged upgrades. Smaller, lighter and great value, the screen's resolution now has pin-sharp HD and the Skullcandy speakers are distortion-free. It lasted eight hours on test.	£200 ★★★★★	BEST FOR VALUE FOR MONEY
8		Apple MacBook Air 13in (2015) Apple is scraping by with pretty much the same Air design as before. You get a new processor, new connectors and slightly improved battery life, but still no Retina screen. However, if a portable road warrior is what you're after, this is still a great choice.	from £850 ★★★★★☆	
NEW 9		Dell XPS 13 This nippy ultrabook packs mucho screen into not much space, without compromising on usability. With a backlit keyboard, decent battery and full HD screen, only its lack of gaming power holds it back. It's also thinner and lighter than the average 13-incher.	£850 ★★★★★☆	
10		Google Chromebook Pixel The new Pixel comes within a hair's breadth of five stars. With its pin-sharp screen and class-leading design, it is a superb laptop. But it's a superb laptop that still only runs one browser. Still, you could always install Ubuntu on it...	from £800 ★★★★★☆	

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HOME COMPUTERS

1		Apple iMac Other than regular power upgrades and a bit of slimming, the iMac has been largely unchanged for a while, but it does now run Apple's lovely Yosemite OS. There's also now a more affordable version and an eye-wateringly expensive 5K model.	from £900 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND BRILLIANCE
2		Sapphire Edge VS8 This mini-PC may look like the Terminator's lunchbox, but it houses AMD's 1.6GHz A8 APU and dedicated HD7600G graphics with 4GB of RAM. A capable little fellow, the VS8 even does a decent job with the latest gaming titles (with the detail dialled back a little).	from £250 ★★★★★	BEST FOR COMPACT POWER
3		Alienware X51 (2014) The X51 hasn't changed a huge amount, but the wee size matched with powerful components make it perfectly suited to HD gaming. Steam Machines are going to liven this market up but right now it's the best balance of power and form in PC land.	from £600 ★★★★★	
4		Raspberry Pi 2 Tastier than ever, the reworked Raspberry Pi 2 is more grown-up and still just as cheap. The key upgrade here is the processor, now with four cores and double the RAM, from 512MB to 1GB. The Pi 2's speed has vastly improved but it still needs a microSD to boot.	£30 ★★★★☆	
5		Zotac ZBOX Sphere OI520 About the size and shape of a cannonball or cantaloupe, this striking sphere will certainly draw attention. For media playback it's perfect, but high-end gaming is a no-go due to low frame rates. However, even in full swing it barely raises a decibel.	£375 ★★★★☆	

GAMES CONSOLES

1		Sony PlayStation 4 It may not quite be the finished article, but this is the best games machine on the planet. It has whisper-quiet operation, a sleek form and bags of power, with full 1080p on all titles and not a whiff of lag. When proper media streaming arrives, it'll be unstoppable.	from £275 ★★★★★	BEST FOR GAMING GRUNT
2		Microsoft Xbox One This is very different to the Xbox One of 2013. Most significantly, the unpopular Kinect feature is now out of the deal, allowing Microsoft to drop the price and releasing enough extra power for developers to make their games look and play better.	£280 ★★★★★	
3		Alienware Alpha It's not quite a PS4 or Xbox One-beater, but this is the most console-like PC there's ever been. Steam is the main interface, but it runs on top of Windows for maximum game compatibility, and performance is very impressive.	from £430 ★★★★☆	
4		Sony PS Vita Slim If you're serious about gaming on the go, the Vita is way better than a smartphone, and when you get home you can play your PS4 games in bed thanks to Remote Play. That's gaming decadence, right there.	£175 ★★★★☆	
5		Nintendo Wii U While it hasn't had the same impact as the original Wii, don't underestimate the U's fun factor. Nintendo's bottomless bag of superb game franchises rolls on with the excitement of <i>Mario Kart 8</i> , with its anti-gravity karts and submarine racing.	£180 ★★★★☆	

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WEARABLES

HOT BUY	1		Apple Watch Apple's Watch is by no means the first smartwatch, but it is the most desirable. It's more luxurious (and yes, more expensive) than its rivals, its software is better thought out, and in the coming months you'll see an explosion of new apps for it.	from £300 ★★★★★	BEST FOR TECH YOU WANT TO WEAR
	2		Jawbone UP3 With its latest band, Jawbone has delivered meaningful fitness data in a stylish package. The splashproof UP3 is unobtrusive, lasts over five days and does well not to overwhelm you with stats; instead it provides useful information at relevant times.	£120 ★★★★★	
	3		Garmin Fenix 3 This is a serious sports watch. It's especially geared for triathlon, with a dedicated race mode, but it's also a great training tool for each discipline and other sports besides. It doesn't do heart monitoring, but a 10-day battery life is your compensation.	£290 ★★★★★	
	4		Pebble Time Steel It's very similar to the Pebble Time, but the extra Gorilla Glass 3 on the front makes it a bit less damage-prone and the bonus battery life means it'll last for a solid week of proper use. These tweaks ensure that the Time Steel is the best Pebble you can buy.	from £220 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR BATTERY LIFE
NEW	5		LG G Watch Urbane While the original G Watch R didn't exactly set our hearts aflutter, the handsome Urbane is currently the best Android Wear smartwatch we've tried. It boasts a slick, superior screen that'll last you nearly two whole days on a single charge.	£180 ★★★★☆	

SMARTHOME

HOT BUY	1		Nest Learning Thermostat Nest has a smart design paired with a ton of features to control your heating in style. We recommend making use of its IFTTT channel: it offers map-based geofencing, or you can fire up the boiler with a text. There's even voice control via Google Now.	£180 (with installation) ★★★★★	
	2		Synology DS214se Within this entry-level hardware beats the best NAS (network attached storage) software yet. Not gorgeous to look at, but at least it's small and easy to hide away. If you're new to the NAS party, the DS214se is the cheapest way to get onboard.	£110 ★★★★☆	BEST FOR BACKUP AND STREAMING
	3		Honeywell EvoHome Set schedules to control the precise temperature of each individual room of your family home, using either the tablet-like central controller or the free Total Connect Comfort app. It's a big old investment, but you'll soon pity anyone living without it.	£220 + £70/radiator + installation ★★★★★	
	4		Netatmo Welcome Netatmo's smartcam now has added face recognition capability, which works reliably well once it knows a face, and all the usual motion and noise detection is controllable. We also like the way individual profiles can be adjusted. Slick and hugely informative.	£200 ★★★★★	
	5		Philips Hue Now with Apple HomeKit support, you can pair these smart LED bulbs with 'recipes' on ifttt.com – set them to change colour when it's time to run for the train. They also tie in with Philips' Ambilight TVs, casting the colours from the screen across your entire room.	from £50 ★★★★☆	

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SLRs

HOT BUY	1		Olympus OM-D E-M1 The Olympus flagship is armed with the same excellent 16.3MP sensor as its predecessor the E-M5, but has an improved autofocus system, a startlingly good electronic viewfinder and masses of direct controls. Also look out for the E-M10.	£560 (body only) ★★★★★	
	2		Sony A6000 Sony's new system camera may be tiny but it packs a big photographic punch. There may be no optical image stabilisation but the incredible speed and accuracy of the A6000's autofocus is a real highlight, as is its large, clear electronic viewfinder.	£370 (body only) ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND VALUE
	3		Nikon D750 It's big and bulky, but otherwise this is one of the most comfortable and intuitive DSLRs money can buy. And with a handy tilt screen and some wireless connectivity features, there's none of the purist snootiness that we saw in the D810.	£1130 (body only) ★★★★★	
	4		Canon EOS 750D The 750D redefines what an entry-level DSLR can be: it's remarkably easy to use, will help you take stunningly good photos whatever your experience level and won't ever let you down.	£400 (body only) ★★★★★	
	5		Sony A7R We love this camera. It's lightweight but tough and delivers results that outstrip pretty much any other compact system camera on the market. It has a huge full-frame 36.4MP sensor and noise-suppression. Your wallet might weep, but your photo album will sing.	£1030 (body only) ★★★★★	

COMPACT CAMERAS

HOT BUY	1		Sony DSC-HX60 2014's HX60 isn't a huge departure from its predecessor in terms of its build quality, ease of use, specifications and 30x zoom lens – all of which are excellent. What it does add is NFC and a newer Bionz X processor, making it a slightly nipper performer.	£180 ★★★★★	
	2		Sony DSC-RX100 III If you're looking for the best tiny snapper around, this is it. Excellent image quality, fast autofocus, a useful electronic viewfinder and professional video recording, all squeezed into a truly teeny package that'll fit into your jeans pocket. We're smitten.	£440 ★★★★★	BEST FOR POCKETABLE POWER
	3		Panasonic Lumix LX100 This is one of the most capable premium compacts on the market – and the LX100's 4K capabilities give it a crucial edge over its rivals. HD video capture and superb stills performance make the Panasonic a star performer when it comes to the basics too.	£430 ★★★★★	
	4		Fujifilm FinePix X100S Fujifilm souped up its fixed-lens retro shooter last year, with faster focusing and a big APS-C sensor. It retains the 35mm (35mm-equivalent) f/2 lens and hybrid viewfinder of the old X100, and a less retro version with black finish is also available.	£550 ★★★★★	
	5		Panasonic Lumix FZ1000 Bridge cameras often feel like a compromise, but the FZ1000 is incredibly versatile: a fixed-lens camera capable of shooting fantastic stills and video in almost any situation. And yes, it's nearly the same as the Leica V-Lux 114, but £300 cheaper.	£510 ★★★★★	

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NEXT BIG THING?



PERPETUAL POWER

Maybe they could look into getting my phone to last the day first...

Poor you, walking around with a pocket-sized portal to more info than you can read in a thousand lifetimes, and it *only* lasts 12 hours. Still, if news from Drayson Technologies is to be believed, you might be able to stop worrying. Their new energy-harvesting tech apparently grabs power from thin air.

Didn't Tesla already try this (and fail)?

Nikola Tesla, that is, not Elon Musk, and sort of but not really. In the early 20th century,

the genius sparkwizard planned to broadcast wireless electricity from giant towers. Drayson's new Freevolt tech, on the other hand, makes use of the energy that's already being beamed all around us. The space around us is awash with untapped ambient power. Freevolt harvesters (which consist of an antenna, rectifier and power module) can harvest ambient RF energy from digital TV broadcasts, Wi-Fi and mobile signals. The collected power can then be used to perpetually power devices without ever having to charge them or faff around with batteries. Clever, eh?

Excellent, so my next phone will live forever?

Not quite. The power generated by the Freevolt system is minuscule, and won't be enough to power an energy-sucking smartphone. The first device to use the tech, the CleanSpace Tag (£55, [our.clean.space](#)) is far simpler. It's a mini sensor that measures and maps the air quality around you, and is completely powered by surrounding radio waves. This could be the first step towards potentially larger devices like watches topping themselves up over time. Fast forward to perpetually powered wearables, and we've got ourselves a game-changer.

[Words Esat Dedezade]

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